Carleton University

In the Belly of the Combine: The NFU's Fight for Family Farming

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts**

Department of Political Science

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

by

Melissa Hunter

May 2003

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The undersigned hereby recommend to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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In the Belly of the Combine: The NFU's Fight for Family Farming

submitted by

Melissa Hunter, BA

in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C. Brown', written over a horizontal line.

Chair
Department of Political Science

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L. Macdonald', written over a horizontal line.

Thesis Supervisor

Carleton University
May 7, 2003

Abstract

In the Belly of the Combine is an investigation into how one particular social movement, the National Farmers Union (NFU), is taking advantage of arising political opportunity structures in Canadian and international politics in order to strengthen its ability to mobilize activists on issues important to its mandate. The changing system of agriculture from one protected by embedded liberalism to the current liberal economic free market expressed in trade agreements such as the WTO, FTA, NAFTA, and the proposed FTAA, have transformed the political system domestically and created new opportunities for the NFU, in which to act, articulate new grievances as well as old, and form alliances with a growing number of like minded organizations. Further, international trade agreements have also provided the organization with opportunities to become active on a transnational level, particularly with the Vía Campesina organization.

Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my father, without his help this study would never have been completed and whose radical farmer persona is the inspiration for this research.

I would also like to thank Tara, who not only had to endure months of farm talk, but also provided a sense of perspective when it was needed most.

Thank you to everyone that helped, Laura Macdonald especially.

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ACRONYMS

AAFC	~ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
ACN	~ Action Canada Network
ADM	~ Archer-Daniels-Midland
AIDA	~ Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance
AoA	~ Agreement on Agriculture
APF	~ Agricultural Policy Framework
BRM	~ Business Risk Management
CCA	~ Canadian Council of Agriculture
CCF	~ Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
CFA	~ Canadian Federation of Agriculture
CFFO	~ Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
CFIP	~ Canadian Farm Income Program
CI	~ Crop Insurance
CoC	~ Council of Canadians
CPR	~ Canadian Pacific Railway
CUSFTA	~ Canada United States Free Trade Agreement
CWB	~ Canadian Wheat Board
DFAIT	~ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
EU	~ European Union
FAO	~ Food and Agriculture Organization
FIPA	~ Farm Income Protection Act
FTAA	~ Free Trade Agreement of the Americas
FUA	~ Farmers' Union of Alberta
FUBC	~ Farmers' Union of B.C.

GATT	~ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GFO	~ General Farm Organization
GGGC	~ Grain Growers' Grain Company LTD.
GM	~ Genetically Modified
IFOAM	~ International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
IFUC	~ Interprovincial Farm Union Council
ILP	~ Independent Labour Party
MGE	~ Manitoba Stock Exchange
MGGA	~ Manitoba Grain Growers Association
NAALC	~ North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation
NAFTA	~ North American Free Trade Agreement
NDP	~ New Democratic Party
NFU	~ National Farmers Union
NFU-O	~ National Farmers Union - Ontario
NISA	~ Net Income Stabilization Account
NSM	~ New Social Movement
OFA	~ Ontario Federation of Agriculture
OFU	~ Ontario Farmers Union
OMAFRA	~ Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and food and Rural Affairs
PI	~ Production Insurance
PSP	~ Pooled Stabilization Program
rBGH	~ Bovine Growth Hormone
RR	~ Roundup Ready
SFU	~ Saskatchewan Farmers Union
SGGA	~ Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association
SM	~ Social Movement
SMO	~ Social Movement Organization

TGGA	~ Territorial Grain Growers Association
TNCs	~ Transnational Corporations
TSMOs	~ Transnational Social Movement Organizations
UFC-SS	~ United Farmers of Canada - Saskatchewan Section
UFO	~ United Farmers of Ontario
UGG	~ United Grain Growers' Limited
WTO	~ World Trade Organization

Introduction: The Crisis in Canadian Family Farming

To the proponents of globalization, liberal reforms and free trade provide the economic liberty to act with greater freedom and increase the wealth of both nations and individuals. As Adam Smith postulated, the greatest wealth both for the nation and the individual is derived from the unfettered pursuit of one's self interest. Globalization's adherents, regardless of failures or opposition, hold firm to their belief in the infallibility and righteousness of their cause. The promise of globalization for greater prosperity for everyone has not been fulfilled; it has instead concentrated the world's wealth among a few individuals and corporations. It has created greater poverty in its exhausting drive for wealth and aided the destruction of the environment on which all life depends. Globalization, in the form of free trade agreements, has promoted a system that fundamentally weakens social protections and which further marginalise a large proportion of the world's population (Kneen, 1993; Barlow, 2000; Qualman, 2002; Rees, 2000). The political and economic changes created by free trade and globalization have created new political opportunity structures for movement action and a growing crisis around which to frame demands and mobilize.

Among those pushed to the periphery are many of the world's farmers, specifically those who operate on a smaller scale. As defined by the NFU, "a family farm is an operation that produces food or other agricultural products and where the vast majority of labour, capital, and management are provided by family members" (NFU, Nov. 2001: G-2). The family farm system in Canada is highly diversified and includes

many different types of farm systems such as livestock, dairy, and grain production. These diverse production types are further enhanced by regional differences in production, weather, and levels of income. As will be discussed in chapter four, the diversity of farming in Canada is a major obstacle for the NFU as it attempts to create a cohesive unit, as the diverse issues often make it difficult to maintain a common sense of grievance among farmers nationally.

This study will look at how the changing political and economic system, especially since the early 1980s, in Canada has created new political opportunities that the NFU is utilizing to mobilize farmers against free trade and recent government policy in agriculture. Also discussed within this thesis, is how, in Canada, free trade has created a crisis in the family farming system that parallels the crisis of the dust-bowl days of the 1930s. This crisis, linked with the changing policies of the government and the move away from embedded liberalism have all culminated in a set of opportunities that is providing the NFU a chance to rise as a social movement organization, not only nationally, but internationally as well.

The NFU was founded in 1969 and chartered by an Act of Parliament in 1970. The organization was created through the merger of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union (SFU), the Ontario Farmers Union (OFU), the Farmers Union of BC (FUBC), and the Farmers Union of Alberta (FUA). Previously, these unions had all existed autonomously in their respective provinces. The act of drawing together into a national organization was facilitated by the growing awareness that, segmented provincially as well as by production types, farmers were being easily ignored in Ottawa. The founding convention

in Winnipeg in 1969 was attended by over 2000 people, all of whom hoped that the formation of the NFU was a step towards better representation of the small and medium farmers across the nation.

In the early 1980s, the disembedding of the liberal compromise caused a decline in the NFU's strength in membership and finances to the point where its effectiveness as a truly meaningful force as a farm organization became questionable. A drastic drop in grain prices and a heavy farm debt load coincided with the decline in the power and influence of the NFU. This is a situation that the NFU continues to battle back against today, particularly in Ontario. The organization remained active throughout the 1970s and 1980s despite the decline in membership and loss of its role in policy making (See Appendix 4.2). It adopted agricultural issues such as fighting for orderly marketing systems, protesting against import dumping, and denouncing the government policies in the 1970s that proposed a two-third reduction of family farms in Canada (proposed in a 1970 Task Force Report on Agriculture). The organization also took part in, and organized, tractor blockades over issues such as marketing boards, tax breaks for farm fuel, low interest loans and the continued encroachment of corporations into the farming sector. The protests and agitation continued throughout the 1970s, meeting with varying degrees success. As will be discussed in chapter four, since the 1980s, the NFU has regains some of what it lost by taking advantage of the political opportunity structures which arose in the early 1980s with the election of the Conservatives federally, the deepening economic recession, and a switch in government policy towards free trade.

The crisis in family farming has a long history in Canada. The number of farmers

in Canada has been declining since the early 1900s, as the nation became more urban and industrialized. However, since the Canada - United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed in 1989 the loss of small farms and drop in farmer net income has accelerated. The number of farms in Canada decreased by 10% between 1995 and 2000. The majority of the farms lost in that period have been those that make less than \$100,000 in gross receipts (See appendix 2.1), while the number of farms which bring in more than \$250,000 have increased substantially over the same period. Another sign that all is not well in the Canadian agriculture sector is the dropping number of farm operators under the age of 35 which, between 1996 and 2001, decreased by 10%. Overall, farmers under the age of 35 now represents only 12% of the farming population¹ (Statistics Canada, 2002). Adding to the crisis is the drop in spending by the Canadian government in agriculture, which has decreased by 48 percent, from \$6.1 billion in 1991, to \$3.3 billion in 2001 (Qualman and Wiebe, 2002).

To understand opposition to free trade agreements as well as the globalization of food and farming, farmers' experiences with free trade must first be understood. I argue in this study that small-scale farmers are being forced to endure both the brunt of the impacts of corporate globalization in agriculture and the increasing concentration in the agricultural sector. The hardship which this has created in the family farming system has provided new political opportunity and mobilization structures and greater solidarity among farmers, which the National Farmers Union (NFU) is taking advantage of as it

¹In the general population, 40% of all workers, and 20% of self-employed workers are under the age of 35.

organizes collective action against free trade.

As the deepening of the farm crisis is mobilizing many farmers in resistance to the neo-liberal system, this work will examine the causes of the crisis in the Canadian small farm sector and will look at how one farmers' organization, the NFU, is taking advantage of the changing opportunities on both the domestic and international levels in order to mobilize resistance against the increasingly anti-small producer policies promoted by globalization and free trade. To provide an historical context to the NFU, the study will first examine the historical evolution of Canadian farm groups as social movement organizations and their responses to free trade agreements (the FTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA], and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas [FTAA]). Through the NFU, many farmers are adopting common framing processes and challenging the liberal economic order in an increasingly radical manner.

This study will delve into the role that the system of free trade has had in pushing the NFU towards a radical discourse and what actions the organization has taken in the free trade debate. Further, there will also be a discussion of what, according to the NFU, are the necessary changes that must be made in the capitalist system if the family farming system is to be saved. To provide a better context for understanding the NFU as it exists today, this study will include an historical sketch of some of the farm movements that came before the NFU and upon which it is based. Here, I will outline the radical populist origins of farmer's organizations in Canada and the gradual co-optation of these groups in the post-World War Two period, which resulted in the dominance of the sector by more conservative groups such as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and the

Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). As well, there will be a brief outline of agriculture's place within the free trade system and the effects the shift from Keynesianism to a neo-liberal economic ideology has had on the opportunities for resistance. In chapter four I will also provide a brief history of the NFU and document the reasons for the NFU's shift toward an anti-free trade position.

The primary research for this paper centres around documents and records of the NFU organization. Specifically, this paper draws on policy papers and research done by both the national office in Saskatchewan, as well as the NFU-Ontario (NFU-O). Several interviews were conducted with members of the NFU-O. These provide a better perspective of what members of the organization feel is the mandate of the NFU, how individual activists are framing their resistance, and any possible solutions that the NFU might put forward.

It is also important to delve into the Canadian government's policy stance on agriculture and the programs which it puts forward for the small and medium sized family farmers. To do so, documents and policy statements produced by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) were analysed. Further to this, research was also done on global trade in agriculture through the World Trade Organization (WTO), as this also has significant impact on Canadian agriculture policy and has necessitated a broadening of the NFU's focus and critique.

The NFU is working to increase its numbers in Ontario. One relatively new member of the organization is my father (who was interviewed for this thesis). He has been a member for nine months, and is the vice-president of the Perth-Oxford chapter of

the NFU-O. This close relationship between myself and the organization (as well as my own rural roots) has advantages and disadvantages for this study. The crisis in the farming sector in Canada is far more real to me than many people in urban centres. This fundamentally motivates the research for this paper, but also makes it difficult to separate myself from the issues. While it was difficult, I hope I succeeded in doing so here.

Considering the importance of alliances for successful mobilization of a social movement this paper will also discuss the links that farmers have made with other organizations in their fight against free trade. In Canada, the NFU works with organizations such as the Council of Canadians (CoC), Greenpeace, and the Sierra Club in protesting the growing liberal economic world regime. However, in exploring the growing global character of the agriculture system, the most important organization that the NFU has become a part of is the Vía Campesina. This is an umbrella transnational social movement organization that brings together farmer and peasant movements from around the world. It emerged as an explicit rejection of the agricultural policies that were emerging in the growing free trade debates and over the complete lack of representation that these talks provided for the people who produce the world's food (Desmarais, 2002). Family farm production and peasant farming are becoming increasingly linked through transnational movements. While the NFU focuses much of its discourse and framing on the family farm as defined above, increasing international political opportunities have caused the NFU to begin to include peasant farmers within its framing process. For the NFU, the general definition of the family farm also applies to peasant farmers. One important distinction that must be made, however, is the much higher level of subsistence

production among peasant farmers in relation to family farmers in industrialized nations. The relative wealth, better opportunities for working off-farm, and secure legal ownership of the land by family farmers in nations such as Canada, provides greater stability for family farmers in the north than their peasant counterparts in the global south.

The NFU was one of the founding members of Vía Campesina and its participation in the movement organization is an important facet of the necessities of global links within anti-economic globalization movements today. I argue that the NFU's shift from nationally oriented to internationalist strategies is an essential element of its entrance into the increasingly radical discourse of anti-liberal economic globalization.

The study will begin with a brief discussion of the major social movement analysis frameworks (Resource Mobilization, New Social Movement Theory, and Political Opportunity Structures). Particularly, this study will focus on political processes and opportunity structures which are enabling the NFU to formulate a critique of the dominant system, create a framing process which is linking farmers across Canada and the hemisphere, and mobilize against both domestic agriculture policy and international policies supplied by institutions such as the WTO.

Using social movement theories, particularly those of political policy and opportunity structures, will help illustrate the circumstances surrounding the NFU and how its actions as a social movement organization are shaped by existing and changing institutions. According to Doug McAdam (1998), the four main dimensions of institutional politics that shape collective action are the open or closed nature of the political system, the stability of elite alignments and the presence of elite allies, and the

state's capacity for repression. Besides the effects of institutional politics on movement organization, mobilization of activists by groups is also influenced by three main factors; the structure of political opportunities, preexisting organizations and resources, and a sentiment of solidarity, all of which heavily influence the NFU's ability for collective action.

Understanding how political structures and policies affect the choices and success of social movement organizations will help illuminate how the NFU functions as a social movement organization within the global liberal economic system of today. It will also provide a framework for understanding the evolution of both agrarian radicalism in Canada and the policy shifts within the NFU itself over its lifetime.

The second chapter will provide an historical overview of many of the agrarian social movements that preceded the NFU. This will also include a discussion on agrarian populism as it is the dominant philosophy among Canadian farm activists. Its theoretical roots are still visible in the NFU today, particularly in its direct membership structure and the often held populist sentiment that 'big is bad.' Farmers have been an active political force in Canada for well over a hundred years, and have experienced both failure and success. Throughout Canadian history, many of farm organizations, whether 'apolitical' like the Dominion Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, populist like the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO), or socialist like the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), have pointed to the 'combines and monopolies' as the source of crisis and instability in the family farming community. This is a theme that is worth noting, as it is also the NFU's dominant critique of the neo-liberal system.

The third chapter will provide a discussion of several free trade agreements, to which Canada is a signatory, and outline the agricultural system in Canada today. The shift in ideology to free market liberalism, as well as the constraints which the new system has placed on domestic policies, has created new opportunities for social movements and social movement organizations, of which the NFU is one. Through agreements such as the NAFTA and the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), transnational agribusinesses are gaining an ever greater share of the market power, and subsequently the distribution of wealth within the farm system. This has led farm groups like the NFU to form an anti-free trade critique. As is discussed in chapter two, farmer movements in the past were almost entirely opposed to protectionism and pro-free trade. The shift in focus towards anti-free trade in the post-World War Two era has come about for two main reasons. The first is that forms of protectionism that existed in the past were meant to facilitate the growth of industry and subsequently hampered the well-being of most farmers. The other reason is that free trade agreements have accelerated the depopulation of rural Canada and has, according to the NFU, engendered the current family farm crisis. Further, a better understanding how the system of agriculture is now structured in Canada, and how the changes to the sector have affected farmers helps illuminate the increasingly radical framing processes being used by the NFU. This discussion will include an overview of Canadian policy, as well as such system structures as relief programs and income stabilization legislation. As the system of agriculture stands today, there is little support for small family farms, or for a sustainable agricultural system. This has created substantial grievances and a sense of national unity among

many farmers, as irrespective of production type or regional location, family farmers are facing the common and constant threat of bankruptcy and the loss of their farms.

The study will finish with an examination of the NFU and how opportunity structures that have arisen over the past two decades have facilitated the organization's shift in tactics and policies. I argue that the radicalization of NFU discourse can be understood as a result of shifting political opportunity structures as well as the growth of new opportunities for mobilization internationally. Included is a brief history of the organization, its mandate and the alternatives to the current system which it puts forth. The discussion will then expand into an investigation of how the NFU and its members perceive the agricultural system. As well, the actions the organization has taken in response to the family farm crisis will be reviewed. Specifically, the chapter will discuss the role the NFU played in the free trade debates of 1988 and 1993 and how since then the organization has reoriented its focus to an international level.

Other farm organizations that operate in Ontario separately from the NFU will also be discussed. The OFA is an example of such a group, it has existed for well over 60 years and has strong historical roots within farm history in Ontario. The lack of effective representation of small farmers by the OFA, however, has opened up space for the NFU to provide representation to those farmers who feel that the OFA is only interested in the issues of the large sized farmers.

The contestation over farm prices and subsidies may seem to be only of interest to those involved in the agriculture industry. This opinion ignores the consequences of the industrial agricultural system which we are creating and institutionalizing today. The

issues that underlie the farm crisis in Canada are ones that will eventually be felt by everyone in society with growing intensity. Such issues are as close as your next meal, they are the determinants of where the food on your table will come from, how much it will cost, and who will control the system that will bring it to you.

The struggle that the NFU has entered into is global in its dimensions. The monolithic and monocultural system that transnational agribusinesses are creating is increasingly preventing nations from feeding themselves or protecting their environment and biodiversity. This makes the NFU's struggle for a sustainable agriculture system, which provides safe and adequate food without exploitation of people or the environment, an alternative that should be considered by all members of civil society, and not just the farmers currently under attack. Without the support of wider society, the struggle for a global system of small sustainable agriculture will never be attained.

Chapter One

Theorizing Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, New Social Movements, and Political Opportunity Structures

This study will begin the discussion of social movement organizations through an approach which links together the social, political and economic realms to better reflect the realities of the political environment in which the NFU is acting. Social movements “are routine means by which relatively powerless groups in industrial democracies make claims to influence the distribution of power and other resources in a state, community, or organization” (Taylor, 2000: 220). The latent power of the masses is often forgotten or unrecognized, both because those who hold power have every reason to suppress its knowledge and also because such power conflicts with the masses’ everyday experience in normal times. Thus, new movements will often first appear in small scattered areas and involve people actively participating in their citizenship, claiming political space which may or may not conform to the areas allowed by the existing system (Robles, 2000).²

The actions of social movement organizations such as the NFU have been affected by the spread of globalization. This is not just the spread of liberal economic ideals and an opening of markets, it is also a force that alters societies and cultures. The opening of borders and the liberalization of national economies elicit societal effects that are often ignored, or labelled as ‘externalities’ to the market by its purveyors. During this process

² Perhaps the most well known example of this sort of action was what took place at the WTO meetings in Seattle in 1999. However, such activities are ongoing events that range widely in tactics. For further reading on reclaiming political space see Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*, 2000.

many groups find themselves pushed to the periphery of society, their traditional tasks rendered redundant in the global economy. Many social movement organizations arise from the groups and communities that have been forced outside the dominant economic framework, such as family farmers in Canada.

The theoretical frameworks that have been used to understand social movements since the 1960s fall into three general categories: Resource Mobilization, New Social Movements, and Political Opportunity Structures. Each of these theories aims to explain how and why social movements form and take action based on a wide range of reasons, from the availability of capital to cultural motivations.

This chapter will include a brief synopsis of the three main social movement theories, but will focus primarily on the Political Process and Opportunity Structures model in order to create a framework to help explain the recent actions of the NFU, particularly its use of radical discourse and strategies in the anti-free trade debate in Canada, and its growing internationalism. As I will argue, while all three theories face criticism and have weaknesses that must be addressed, Political Opportunity is the theory best adaptable to the experiences of the NFU in the increasingly global context in which it exists.

Resource Mobilization

Resource Mobilization theory deals with how social movements act, and contends that all basic questions that might be asked about social movement mobilization can be related to the evaluation of the costs and benefits of participation in a social movement

organization (SMO)³. This area of social movement literature is almost entirely concerned with how social movements and SMOs mobilize. Movements are interpreted as participating in rational and organized action based upon a calculation of what the costs and benefits of such actions are, while also incorporating the presence of resources into any possible actions (Della Porta and Diani, 2000).

According to this theory, the NFU would be interpreted as a SMO rooted in an agrarian SM that has emerged because of the availability of resources that permit it to promote its message on the political stage. The theory shifts the focus away from the motivation of participants or the structural context from which movements emerge, towards the resources that are needed to engage in a social movement organization. As such, when looking at the NFU, it can be argued that the main motivation of the organization is acquiring the resources (including people, money, media and information) needed in order to influence the political process. From this perspective, the NFU's attempts to increase its membership base in Ontario would be seen as a result of a rational decision to increase not only membership numbers, but also revenues from participants in order that it might have a more effective role in agricultural politics in Ontario.

Resource Mobilization theory also argues that social movement organizations are political challenges by institutionally rooted and rational groups. Grievances are not a

³ In Resource Mobilization, **Social movements (SMs)** are defined as beliefs that represent preferences for change in society. **Social Movement Organizations (SMOs)** are the complex, formal organizations that identify their goals based on a SM. **Social Movement Industries (SMIs)** include all SMOs that have overlapping goals, all of which reflect the same SM. The **Social Movement Sector (SMS)** is made up of all the SMIs in the society, which implies that social movements have become institutionalized with in modern society. (McCarthy and Zald, 1979)

critical factor in generating social movement organizations. In this view, movement organizations are more likely to come into being because of the access to control over various resources that are necessary in order to be an effective social movement organization. The NFU, for example, was created through the combination of several smaller, regional farm movements; it can be argued that this took place in order to increase resources, and thus increase the effectiveness of the social movement organization in the political field.

While this theory explains some of the reasons for the rise of many social movement organizations, it tends to oversimplify the role of grievances and downplay the role of ideational factors in mobilization. It offers an ahistorical approach which limits analysis of collective actions and carries “hyperrational” assumptions about participants within movements. At the same time, Resource Mobilization frames actions within an individual orientation, ignoring the often collective identity of social movements (Beuchler, 2000). By neglecting the collective structure of social movements, Resource Mobilization theory fails to acknowledge the internal diversity of the membership of many SMs and SMOs. For example, the NFU not only carries within it many regional divisions (which in agriculture is fundamental to the issues that are important) it also represents issues from a diverse set of farming systems. While all of these are based upon the principle of the small family farm, there are several different types of farming methods that the NFU recognizes under its purview (the biggest difference being between those who use chemicals, however small the amount, and those who do not). If resource issues were indeed predominant and considering the relatively small number of farmers in

Canada who at this time practice low input operations, it would make more economic sense to formulate, as the OFA does, a more general policy base that would include the richer large farm systems.

Resource Mobilization's emphasis on instrumental action in the political and economic domain also leaves out culture, which often underpins such strategic action. Rather than sites of oppression and resistance, SMOs are conceived as opportunistic and entrepreneurial reflections of institutional change. This focuses the level of analysis on the meso-level, and allows, for the most part, Resource Mobilization theory to ignore both the macro, and micro-levels. By focussing on the level of organization, questions on the macro-level such as social structure or historical change are left undiscussed, while smaller questions such as individual motivations and social interaction also receive very little attention. As Beuchler (2000) argues, this single level of analysis often has the effect of separating social actors from their historical contexts and possible structural constraints as they take part in collective action. In the case of the NFU, the theory is primarily concerned with the organization and its economic motivations. This means issues that might affect actions of the organization, such as the historical nature of farm movements, crises in agriculture in the past, the importance of the rural agrarian culture, and globalization are left out of the analysis.

New Social Movement Theory

Another common approach to studying social movements is a range of theories often grouped together as New Social Movement theory. This framework deals with why social movements and social movement organizations form and act as they do. In many

ways this theory is a response to the American focussed Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity Structures theories which emerged in the United States. New Social Movement theory rejects the Marxist understanding of conflict as based on and encompassing the 'working class versus capitalist class' struggle. Theorists such as Clause Offe (1985) argue that conflicts conditioned mainly by the dynamic of class relations are no longer sufficient or even relevant to the social movements and social movement organizations that have arisen since the 1960s (women's movement, environmental movement, civil rights etc).

New Social Movement theory contends that social movements are divided between the 'old' and 'new.' The most prominent of the 'old' social movements is labour unionism, which is differentiated from new social movements due to its willingness to work within the structures of power. 'Old' movements also believe that there is a society-wide agreement on the parameters for acts of resistance. 'New' social movements no longer define themselves principally in relation to the systems of production and now "seek to politicize the institutions of civil society in ways that are not constrained by the channels of representative bureaucratic political institutions" (Offe, 1985: 820). This theory proposes that social movements and social movement organizations no longer limit themselves to material gain, but aim to challenge the very notions of power and politics.

However, the New Social Movement theory fails to address what mechanisms actually lead from conflict to action. A more significant criticism is the strict delineation between old and new social movements which ignores that the old are in some ways the

foundation for, and influence, the new movements (Buechler, 2000). The NFU as a SMO arguably falls within the 'New' social movement category as defined above. This is because the organization works not only alone but also with other movement organizations such as the CoC, in order to politicise civil society and effect political change on a variety of issues such as health care and genetic modification technology. Further, as will be discussed in later chapters, the NFU is attempting to politicise civil society in order to help protect the food system and to change the very structure of society. While the movement organization is working to ensure the material well being of its members it is also fighting to ensure a healthy and stable environment. The NFU is also struggling to change the accepted understanding of what is efficient and productive (sustainable family farming versus massive industrial mono-agriculture).

However, even as the NFU is defined as a new social movement organization, it also fits within the understanding of the 'old' movements. As we will see, there is a long historical tradition of populist mobilization among peasants and small farmers to which the NFU is closely linked. As well, its tactics and strategies often resemble those of 'old' social movement organizations. One of the primary purposes of the Union is to ensure that farmers receive a fair return on their products. As well, the NFU is comfortable working within the structures of power, publishing reports for government committees and working with the bureaucracy to affect change. As the case of the NFU demonstrates, agrarian movements and organizations are among the oldest forms of 'modern' political resistance in Canada and throughout the world. Indeed, when discussing the origins of capitalism, it becomes apparent that one of the first sacrifices

made in the name of the free market (thus causing some of the first protests) was the old agrarian system that existed in pre-industrialized Europe, especially in Britain (Wood, 2000).

That the NFU can be defined as both ‘old’ and ‘new’ is perhaps one of the best examples of the weakness in the categories of New Social Movements theory. However, Alberto Melucci defends New Social Movements theory, responding to critics by presenting the theory as a “fluid, sensitizing device for exploring contemporary forms of protest” (Quoted in Beuchler, 2000: 50). Steven Beuchler (2000) further articulates this defence, arguing that New Social Movements theory is attempting to provide links between social structure and forms of collective action, all of which are ‘new.’ As such, he argues that the newness that the theory focusses on is not the newness of the movement in isolation, but more the newness of the social structures to which the movements are responding.

Political Opportunity Structures

Political Opportunity Structures theory (also known as the political process model) is often defined as an expansion upon Resource Mobilization. It too is a rational based theory, however it also looks to how the structure of political opportunity works to shape the potential for success of a social movement or social movement organization. Political Opportunity theory aims to observe what characteristics of the political system influence “the growth of less institutionalized political action in the course of what are defined as protest cycles” (Della Porta and Diani, 2000:10). Unlike Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity does not define movements as extensions of

conventional politics. Instead it focuses on the power struggles between the members and the challengers of the polity. It does, however, borrow the emphasis which Resource Mobilization places on the role of resources and organization, but presents these processes as both internal and external to the development of movement organizations. The theory also defines as a crucial aspect of mobilization, namely how and when people perceive the changing conditions (political, organizational, and resources) as favourable for successful collective action and protest. According to Jeffery Ayres (1998), even when “Campaigns may appear rational, strategic, and goal-oriented, but the political-process model factors people, and the subjective meanings they attach to their situation into its theoretical equation” (19).

Doug McAdam (1998), outlines four general dimensions of institutional politics that shape collective action. First is the relative open or closed nature of the political system; second is the stability or instability of elite alignments that form the base of a polity; third is either the presence of elite allies, or lack thereof; and fourth is the state’s capacity and its propensity to act in a repressive manner. Linked to these dimensions are three crucial factors for mobilization raised by Jeffery Ayres (1998). The first is the existence of a suitable structure of political opportunities which aids in the building of political alliances and helps movements and movement organizations gain the notice of political groups and elites. Second, there must be preexisting organization and resources in order for movement organizations to take advantage of the opportunities. Third, since a conducive environment can only provide the opportunity for successful protest, the movement organization must command a sentiment of solidarity and moral commitment

on the part of individual activists. Indeed, it is mainly the resources of the minority community that allows insurgent groups to exploit opportunities to mobilize that arise through political change (Ayres, 1998). Much of the Political Opportunity literature confirms the need for a high degree of organizational readiness and strength in order for movements and movement organizations to convert existing political opportunities into an organized and sustained protest campaign.

Two important parts of maintaining organizational readiness are the use of mobilizing structures and framing. Mobilizing structures are informal and formal ‘vehicles’ used by people to come together and engage in collective action. Frames, meanwhile, mediate between “opportunity, organization and action [and] are the shared meaning that people bring to their situations” (McAdam et al, 1997:157). The framing process is used to condition the perceptions of grievances and optimism and then apply them collectively to the entire group, even society. In order to create a strong sense of unity among organization activists, it is imperative that all of the participants frame the issues in a similar way, and as well, they should all feel aggrieved but also optimistic that the movement organization will be successful in causing change. The NFU uses several framing processes. Perhaps the most unifying is the ‘common enemy’ of big agribusinesses. By centralising farmers’ grievances around a singular issues such as corporations, the NFU is able to better unify what is otherwise a very diverse group of people.

Both mobilizing structures and framing are important factors in gaining the support from the polity for an organization’s goals. Successful mobilization and framing

not only create a cohesive unit; they may also provide for closer alliances with other sectors of civil society. As Tilly argues along with McAdam (1998), it is alliances with members of the polity which are the most important part of the success of any movement organization. If an organization gains the support of the polity, it becomes better protected from repression or marginalisation. Alliances with the polity are not the only important partnerships which movement organizations must form. Alliances with other organizations based on common interests, ideologies, and shared characteristics all play an important part in mobilizing support for a movement organization.

A primary example of the usefulness of alliances between organizations is the case of the NFU during the FTA debate of mid 1980s. The shifting political structures within the Canadian government and the disembedding of the liberal compromise all provided an opportunity for the NFU to become more active in its anti-free trade campaign (Ayres, 1998). However, without the aid of other organizations, particularly the Action Canada Network (ACN), the NFU would have failed to produce the readiness and strength needed to successfully take advantage of the changing policies and structures due to a lack of resources and the small size of the organization. Another, more current, example of this is the partnership between the NFU and Council of Canadians, which included campaigns against GMO seeds in Canada and a continuation of the free trade debate (this is discussed further in a later chapter).

For movement organizations that seek to both influence policy and civil society, while also attempting to fundamentally change the existing institutions, the framework of Political Opportunity Structures provides a more viable analysis than either Resource

Mobilization or New Social Movement theory. By placing the political process at the centre of the analysis, while identifying political conditions and opportunities as the determining factors in the successful emergence and growth of social movement organizations, the motivations, policies, and recent actions of the NFU are better explained (Ayres, 1998). Further, unlike in New Social Movement theory, movements and movement organizations are not separated from the formal political process or labelled anti-institutional in Political Opportunity theory. Rather, the approach acknowledges that many movement organizations often interact with dominant groups, elites, and established parties in order to achieve their goals (Ayres, 1998).

According to the Political Process model, movement organizations arise most often during times of change in the institutional roles, political alignments, and alliance structures of the dominant groups. Major political upheavals, like war, and economic crises, such as depressions and deep recessions, can exacerbate cleavages between political elites. This increases the momentum of movement organizations by granting more leverage to aggrieved groups with which to press their claims. Therefore, it is during destabilising and changing political conditions that groups which have been previously excluded from the decision-making apparatus gain greater opportunities for collective action and protest (McAdam et al, 1997; Ayres, 1998). In the past, divisions and instability among the dominant groups have benefited movement organizations in a variety of diverse contexts, including farm worker, civil rights, and nuclear protests in the United States. In Canadian history, farm movement organizations have repeatedly arisen most successfully during such times of crisis, however, their characteristics have differed

depending on the structures existent at the time, and the policies of those in power (this will be discussed in the next chapter).

It is important to note that movements and movement organizations are not just created through the emergence of political opportunities, they are also profoundly shaped by the structures to which they have access. In the case of the NFU, for most of its history it has had some sort of legitimate access to the structures of power through Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC). According to Katzenstein (1998), access to formal institutions often causes movement organizations to develop influence seeking rather than radical discursive politics. In Katzenstein's study of women's movements in the military and Catholic Church, she found that for women in the military, reliance on legitimized avenues of contestation has heightened their accountability to institutional authority and thus both detracted from the power of activists in the military to challenge the authority of the institution and increased their dependence on activists from outside the institution. In contrast, women in the church have not had legitimized recourse to institutional structures and this has fostered the development of a radical discursive politics which challenges the very foundations of the institution (Katzenstien, 1998).

While the Political Opportunity Structures theory builds upon Resource Mobilization and strengthens some of its weaknesses, it also adopts a form of political reductionism and often fails to address the fact that many new movement organizations simultaneously develop both within a political context and within a climate of cultural innovation (Della Porta and Diani, 2000). Like Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity Structures theory puts culture aside in order to focus on organizations and

resources. This limits the analysis that the theory can offer, as culture can often be a defining factor in how individuals structure the meaning of the world around them, and thus organize. In the NFU for example, the distinctive culture of rural communities leads to a different conceptualisation of what 'efficiency' means, as opposed to an urban industrial culture. This in turn can affect many aspects of the social movement organization, such as the concepts of cost and benefits of actions taken by the organization.

However, recent publications by authors such as McAdam (1998) seem to be attempting to create room within the framework for culture, though it is still less important than politics and structure. McAdam recognizes the influence of culture on the motivations of movement participants, and that often mobilization processes are based on shared cultural understandings of society. However, he argues that without the political process and opportunity structures being made available to these movement organizations, it would be very difficult to effect any sort of successful change (McAdam, 1998).

Political Opportunity Structures succeeds in shifting attention more towards the interactions of new and traditional actors in the political arena, and also between less traditional forms of actions and institutionalized systems of representation (Della Porta and Diani, 2000). Political Opportunity Structures theory rejects the "individualist flavor of the older theories in favor of newer perspectives that emphasize the structural dimensions and dynamics of collective mobilization and action" (McAdam, 1998:251). This represents a more holistic approach that goes much further than the efforts of either

Resource Mobilization theory or the consequent adaptations of early Political Opportunity theory towards overcoming the methodological individualism of early American social movement theory. An individualist focus inherently truncates the study of social movements creating an almost singular distraction with the so-called free rider problem to the exclusion of understanding the dynamic interaction of choice and socialization, between social institutions and individual action. An important point made by both McAdam (1998) and Lichbach (1998) is that Political Opportunity Structures theory sometimes becomes vague and all encompassing, lending itself to post-hoc explanations in which almost anything could be attributed to a political opportunity structure. This lack of analytical rigour is a serious shortcoming in Political Opportunity theory that tends to promote its use as a descriptive grab bag of categorization without much predictive or analytical value. Perhaps this reflects the infancy of the theory rather than its value once it has been refined through debate and dialogue.

Social Movements on a Transnational Level

At the same time that economic globalization is slicing across geopolitical borders, so too are sites of resistance and social movements no longer restricted to the 'local.' These sites, movements and organizations are becoming increasingly regional and global in the scope of their issues and goals. It is now necessary to consider not only the national factors that define opportunities for collective actions, but also factors on a regional and international level. In highlighting global policy processes, not only national decision making structures but also international structures must be taken into account, and so too must new and broader cultural contexts, which often involve procedures, rules

of access, allies and adversaries, and systems of meaning and value that carry a different meaning than in a national arena.

Social movement organizations are increasingly emerging on the transnational level. Transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) are arising in response to the growing number of political opportunities on the international stage. Social movement organizations can be defined as transnational when they act to build international cooperation around a set of shared goals (Smith et al., 1997). These TSMOs act to promote international cooperation and contribute various forms of political leverage needed to overcome the systemic barriers to global resistance. According to Jackie Smith (1997), TSMOs must “incorporate members from more than two countries, have some formal structure, and coordinate strategy through an international secretariat” (61). In today’s global environment TSMOs provide forums for generating debate across nations and also consensus around the framing of a problem and the use of appropriate mobilizing structures.

A primary goal of many TSMOs may be to create a sense of transnational solidarity beyond state boundaries in order to give people a global, trans-state identity in which a higher loyalty prevails. TSMOs which seek to influence policy, are capable of targeting a variety of national, intergovernmental, and transgovernmental political arenas. The more a movement organization can aggregate popular interests into concrete policy demands, the more effective it should be at coordinating global strategy and utilizing political opportunities created by intergovernmental and international institutions (Smith et al, 1997). This is reflected in the decision of the NFU to participate in the transnational

Vía Campesina, which will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

The dynamics of international political economy, national based institutions, and individual actions are complex and interrelated processes that inform both broad social structures as well as action at the individual level. Transnational action is further complicated by the fact that different national contexts offer varying opportunities for mobilization and political action. Social theory must aim to incorporate these difference while also drawing the reciprocal linkages between the different levels of analysis by creating illustrations of the interrelationships that link the local, the national, and the international spheres. As demonstrated by Katzenstein (1998) and McAdam (1998), individual choices are informed by and through a broader social context that social movement theory must incorporate into its analysis.

The concept of political opportunities must be further broadened to analyse the influence of the international realm in shaping domestic opportunity structures, as political opportunities which affect domestic policies now often arise internationally. McAdam (1998) examines a range of cases demonstrating the varied ways in which international pressures have influenced national opportunity structures. The clearest illustration of this is the influence of cold war politics in the US in the late 1940s on domestic policies concerning race relations⁴. He argues convincingly that the desire for influence against communism in the Third World was a significant contributor to the

⁴The United States faced wide spread criticism for its race policies, and lost much of its 'legitimacy' in the fight against communism when it was pointed out (usually by Russia) that the nation was not the bastion of democracy it made it self out to be. Further, Russia went so far as to approach African and Asian nations and point out that based on American race politics, people of their nations were worth less in American eyes.

transformation of American race politics.

The significance of international political economy should not be swept aside in the analysis of social movement politics. It has been argued that economic interdependence creates significant restrictions on national policy choices (Susan Strange [1995] and Peter Evans [1997]) and that politics and economy cannot be so easily separated if our aim is to understand social systems in the twenty first century. It follows that “international forces frequently shape the structure of domestic political opportunities available to challenging groups” (McAdam, 1998:265).

Though the main social movement theories have different characteristics, Della Porta and Diani (2000) maintain that they share a concern for four characteristic aspects of social movements and social movement organizations. The first is the role of informal interaction networks which form the base for social movement organization and mobilization. Second is the understanding of shared beliefs and a sense of solidarity that helps provide continuity in a movement organization over a period of time. Third is collective action that focuses on protests used by social movement organizations to promote or oppose social change. Fourth is the use of protest where the three theories analyse the relevance of violent and radical tactics in order to differentiate between types of movement organizations or the different phases in the life of a movement.

Another added concern that these theories share is the growing need to be able to place social movement organizations within a global, or transnational perspective. All social movement theories must now apply to a wider analysis, as the growing regional and transnational links not only affect resource mobilization but also the framing process

used to create solidarity by linking grievances, in order to encompass the growing number of cultures and issues. The global civil society movement is an excellent example of framing on an international scale. The movement and its affiliated organizations not only includes a plethora of different actors, including students, labour, environmentalists and farmers, but also stretches across borders and cultures uniting activists against liberal economic globalization. Part of the response to economic globalization has been a broadening of focus and increasing necessity to form international links with other organizations. This has created the situation in which movement organizations must be capable of incorporating more than just the narrow domestic issues that might have once sufficed. Therefore, social movement theory must also begin to incorporate the broadening of many movement organizations in response to globalization.

One of the best examples of such broadening in the area of food systems and agriculture is provided by Vandana Shiva. Many of her theories focus on the struggle of Indian farmers to regain control over their seeds. In recent years, patent laws have given increasing power and control of seed use and production to transnational corporations. This is having a direct impact on small and peasant farmers in India. According to Shiva (1994), within the political space and structures created by the dominant discourse, powerful groups on the local level are seeking to gain global power in order to become free from local, national, and global control.

Shiva (1994) also argues that whenever the global reach of the dominant group is threatened by resistance, the language of resistance is co-opted and used to legitimate

future control by the hegemony⁵. As such, problems surrounding agriculture, biodiversity, and the environment are constructed to hide the role and responsibility of the hegemony in the destruction of the systems which still support the majority of people. Shiva further argues that the World Bank, and its institutions, has supported and planned new market systems for seed and chemical industries that include the “substitution of diversity based agriculture and forest systems by a monoculture of green revolution wheat, rice, and eucalyptus plantations” (Shiva, 1994:198). For Shiva, this co-optation is very important. By making issues such as bio-diversity part of the elite repertoire, the dominant class (here working through the World Bank) becomes the protector of biodiversity, and can thus gain greater access to it. This, according to Shiva, then allows corporations such as Cargill to move in and control the market and seeds in nations such as India.

Other theories of global resistance have also emerged. Manuel Castells (2001) provides an excellent overview of why global movement organizations are forming, and how they are reacting to the perceived loss of control over lives, environment, governments, jobs, economies and the general fate of the earth. Using the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico as a foil, Castells argues that anti-globalization social movement organizations promote a dual form of opposition. While certainly not inclusive, many

⁵Here, hegemony is understood to be the dominant control by one group of society. It is often characterised by a relationship of domination and consent in which the dominant elite are given consent by civil society to rule. In today's system the dominant hegemony would be one controlled by liberal economic ideologues. For further reading on this subject please see Antonio Gramsci, 1999, Robert Cox, 1987, and James Mittelman, 2000).

movement organizations are fighting both against the exclusionary consequences of economic modernisation, and challenging the fatalism of the neo geo-political order under which capitalism becomes universally accepted.⁶

Conclusion

Social movements and social movement organizations demand social and political change while existing outside the established political institutions. They exist as organized collective efforts working to achieve social change from outside the dominant historic bloc (Burstein et al, 1995). Very few social movement organizations have the ability or power to make demands upon the government by virtue of their place outside of the state recognized society.

In order to even have the power to make demands, social movement organizations must first overcome a deficit of structural power through the use of “symbolic resources and selective disorder” (Williams, 2001: 85-86). As ‘outsiders’, these groups lack formal representation in government decision-making and are placed outside the power structures of both state institutions and civil society. (Burstein et al, 1995). By acting outside the dominant institutions it is possible to conceptualise alternatives and create frames which link other activists in similar situations. One excellent example of this in the farming sector is Vía Campesina, which was formed in the context of an increasingly globalized agricultural economy. As an organization with members throughout the

⁶There are many excellent works on social movements in the global context which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Vandana Shiva’s *Stolen Harvest* (2000) further illuminates her position. Bill Moyer’s *Doing Democracy* (2001) provides a broad overview and Dale Hathaway’s *Allies Across the Border* (2000) looks specifically at the case of Mexico.

world, its rejection of the neo-liberal policies that push countries into cash crop export production clearly represents a growing sentiment among people who are mobilizing in response to the changing political opportunity structures, both domestically and also internationally (Desmarais, 2002).

Using social movement theories, particularly those of political policy and opportunity structures, will help illustrate the circumstances surrounding the NFU and its actions as a social movement organization. This study will apply the four main dimensions of institutional politics that according to Doug McAdam shape collective action (open or closed nature of the political system, stability of elite alignments, presence of elite allies, and the state's capacity for repression). As well, the three crucial factors of mobilization; the structure of political opportunities, preexisting organizations and resources, and a sentiment of solidarity, will be looked at in the context of the NFU.

Understanding how political structures and policies affect the choices and success of social movement organizations will help illuminate how the NFU functions as a social movement organization within the global liberal economic system of today. It will also provide a framework for understanding the evolution of agrarian radicalism in Canada, and also the policy shifts within the NFU itself. Perhaps the most fundamental shift within the organization has been the incorporation of international issues such as food security and the rights of farmers in the global South.

There are several specific factors discussed above which I will draw from in order to better analyse the NFU. The analysis will be based primarily on the concept of political opportunity structures. This theoretical framework can help explain the manner

in which the changing nature of the Canadian government in the 1980s created political opportunities for the NFU to mobilize. The use by the NFU of state institutions will also be looked at within this framework. This interaction with the power structures affects the movement organization's tactics, and as this relationship has changed so too has the NFU's collective action. Further, these shifting opportunity structures have contributed to the growing radicalization of the organization, coupled with participation in a TSMO (Vía Campesina), which has also been a factor in radicalising the movement. By understanding the opportunity structures that have arisen in the recent past, as well as the framing process which the NFU has taken up, the movement organization's tactics and policies are better understood, as are the fundamental changes within the agriculture system for which it is calling. Further, the NFU must also be better understood within the framework of globalization. The growth of a global economic and political system has created opportunity and mobilization structures on an international level, and the NFU is now taking advantage of this in order to gain greater influence in not only domestic but also transgovernmental policy.

In the following chapter, there will be a short discussion on a selection of the agricultural movements, fore-runners to the NFU, that have arisen during periods of upheaval and crisis throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries. The story of farmer organizations in Canada forms the foundation for a strong tradition of populism and radical democracy among farmers. These groups aimed to create alternatives to the growing 'new' economic liberal system, which in the years after the First World War began its push to turn agriculture from a family run process of food production into an

industrial business. A focus on political opportunities produces a rich discourse on political rules and institutions, strategic choice, and changes in the forms of contention, all of which will allow for a better in-depth study of the motivations and evolution of agrarian movements in Canada, culminating in the NFU.

Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and organizational resources are part of social movement organizations, and all depend on processes of social construction and framing. What is required is a synthesis of these three major strands of research emerging from the main core of social movement research. By striving to do so, Political Opportunity Structures holds much more promise for theoretical progress than an endless disputation between rival schools.

Chapter 2

The Roots of Organized Farming in Canada - 1800 to 1961

The combine is strong and sinewy in its limbs as a gorilla, its head contains the brain of a shrewd despot, the eye of the far-seeing tiger, the wrath of the all-consuming hyena. It sees everything, it cogitates upon everything, it devours everything, and in its capacious belly it converts the pawned wedding ring of the pallid mother, the pawned shoes of the shivering babe, the pennies of the half-starved newsboy, the pledged tools of the workman into dollars that make its members fat and strong (*The Sun Newspaper*, June 7, 1892, Quoted in Hann, 1974: 16).

The history of farm organizing in Ontario dates as far back as the beginning of the 19th Century. The first type of farming groups that formed were agricultural societies in the pre-Confederation era. These societies held regular meetings at which were discussed issues important to farmers such as field and animal husbandry and the improved use of new farm implements. The following discussion traces the path of farmer organizations in Canadian history prior to the era of globalization. This will help to illuminate the shift from the radical rhetoric of the 19th Century to a more conciliatory discourse from within the institutions of the Keynesian period, which in turn shifted to the current period of growing radicalism in the face of a changing global economic regime. This chapter will discuss how the changing political opportunity structures in Canadian history created the possibility for radical agrarian organizations. Further, it will provide an overview of the manner in which changing political structures and arising crises allowed the organizations to successfully create unity and solidarity among farmers both in Ontario and nationally. This will provide an historical context for the NFU as it now takes advantage of the political opportunity structures created by globalization.

The NFU has strong roots in many of the organizations discussed below. It is important to have an understanding of the culture of agrarian resistance from which the NFU emerged, and how this has affected the manner in which the NFU uses institutions, structures, and alliances to further its own goals. Understanding the importance of state structures and policies in the mobilization and success of organizations allows for a greater comprehension of why agrarian groups have arisen in the past, and how the discourse in the long history of agrarianism has shifted between radical action and institutional conciliation over the past 100 years.

The farm movements discussed in this chapter arose during economic crises and social upheavals. Some groups witnessed the onset of industrialization and the market economy, while others also witnessed wars and depressions. All of these upheavals acted to push farmers further into the margins of the increasingly urban and industrial society in Canada. Although throughout the 1800s agriculture and family farms became increasingly market-oriented, they still possessed certain non-economic attributes that affected the economic choices that farmers made in ways that were not characteristic of workers in manufacturing or transportation. The shift in focus to the market caused a polarization within the farm community between the desire to maintain the small farm way of life and the agrarian ideal which it supported and the wish to expand the cash flow that was increasingly necessary for a successful farm operation (Sandwell, 1994).

The Farmers' movements that began in the late 1800s were important social movements of that era; they not only began by questioning the power of the 'big interests,' but they are also effective case studies in how movements often arise due to

structural opportunities caused by the alterations of state action, shifts in elite ideology and tactics, and the crisis which often produces these situations. Depending on the system structure when they arose, some of the farm organizations attempted to work within the confines of the already existing structures and many were eventually broken apart by internal divisions and stresses caused by different visions of what the movement was meant to do.

The period of the early 20th century is also an important point in the history of farm social movements, as it was the last time that the farming population was large enough to constitute a real challenge in Canadian politics (Badgley, 2000). Indeed, while in 1891, 46.1% of the 'gainfully employed' population in Canada worked in agriculture, by 1931, that share had been reduced to 28.7%, as people continued to leave the countryside for jobs in the cities (Green, 1971). As appendix 2.1 demonstrates, the number of farms is continuing to decrease today. As well, the importance of agriculture within the Canadian economy has decreased as the sector's share of the Gross National Product (GNP) has continuously declined over the past century. In 1926, agriculture's share of the GNP was at 18%. In 1979, agricultural GNP had fallen to 3.4%, a trend that has continued to the present as manufacturing and high technology sectors grow in size and wealth (Canada [Statistics Canada], 1999a; Canada [Statistics Canada], 1999b).

The UFO, Patrons of Industry, and Granges all found a common ground in their actions against what the UFO termed the 'Big Interests' (political parties, heads of capital and the media). These sentiments are echoed today by many rural social movement organizations, most notably the National Farmers Union. The NFU will be dealt with in

greater detail in later chapters. This chapter will provide a short discussion of the farmers' movements that came before the NFU, all of which not only hold the seeds of the activism that takes place in the organization today, but also provide ample evidence for the emergence of movement organizations through the creation of opportunity structures due to structural change and crisis.

Historical Opportunity Structures in Agrarian Activism

The history of farmer movements in Canada carries with it a tradition of populism and radical democracy. Even organizations that eschewed politics often found themselves working towards a system that would better represent farmers in parliament. Today, there are several different farmers' organizations in Canada, but only one views itself as both a national representative for farmers, while also working to change the dominant liberal economic system. While the NFU does not participate directly in politics, as some of its predecessors did, it still works, much like the UFO or the National Progressive Party, to alter the understanding of what is important and to create better circumstances for the family farmer in Canada.

The tactics and policies of the various organizations were often affected by the political environment from which they emerged and the opportunity structures that existed at the time of crisis and mobilization. The political and economic system in Canada has gone through several shifts in ideology and tactics over the past century. This in turn has affected the rise and manner of critique of agrarian social movements. Based on the nature of state action and the dominant critiques by farmers, there are three general stages into which agrarian movements fit in Canada. The first existed at least until the

Second World War. This time period was one of growing liberalism and a system of unregulated market capitalism that would eventually lead to the Great Depression. There were few opportunities offered for groups such as farmers to act within the existing institutions and a strong set of alliances existed between politicians and business leaders. For farmers, the main unifying and motivating issues during this period were tariffs and combines. The agrarian organizations operating between the late 1800s and 1930s demanded the reduction of tariffs and a move to reciprocity in trade with the rest of the world (really the US and Britain). This was due to the premium prices that farmers had to pay for imported goods due to the tariffs that were put in place to protect Canadian industries from American-based competition. However, in response to the tariffs, many US corporations had simply set up branch plants within Canada, and this was crowding out local capital. Farmers argued that the only real effect of the tariffs was to facilitate a tendency toward 'combination' or market concentration (Wood, 1975).

The anti-tariff theme continues as a main farmer grievance up until the 1970s⁷. The issue is muted during the 1950s and 1960s, however, with the creation of the welfare state and embedded liberalism, both of which provided an economic system less dependent on the market and state structures which facilitated an environment of cooperation between the government and farm organizations. With the state taking an active role in protecting domestic interests, tariffs (where they existed) were being used

⁷It should be noted that there are still some farm organizations in the west today that are fully against tariffs, though for a different reason than their predecessors. These groups, diametrically opposed to the NFU, argue that farmers would be better off if they had the freedom to sell their produce where they wanted, to whom they wanted, at the price they wanted.

for a different purpose than in the past, one that was more successful at protecting the small producers such as farmers. However, consolidation among agribusinesses continued during this period, though at a slower rate than the pace set in today's agriculture system. Further, as a result of the creation of direct marketing systems and anti-monopoly legislation a greater depth of integration was prevented past a certain point (Lipset, 1968).

The third period of agrarian protest is the one currently being experienced through organizations such as the NFU. The political and economic system began to shift in Canada between the late 1970s and mid-1980s. The two benchmarks for the new liberal economic system were the Uruguay Round GATT negotiations and the signing of the FTA between the US and Canada. The system that these processes initiated will be discussed in later chapters; suffice it here to say that this system of growing global economic neo-liberalism has shifted the discourse of organizations like the NFU away from conciliation toward a more radical critique of the system. The global context has also created new opportunities for mobilization across national boundaries, and this has caused a shift to an international perspective by many movements. This has further politicised the movement and broadened its base of critique to include issues of global food security, the environment, and the health and well-being of farmers and workers in other nations, particularly the global South.

Agrarian Populism

A common characteristic of the farm movements in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries was the political philosophy of populism. According to David Laycock (1990),

there were four basic forms of agrarian populism between 1910 and 1945. They included social democratic populism (articulated later by the CCF), radical democratic populism (concerned with reform from below), plebiscitarian populism (most unorthodox form, concerned with governing through general will), and crypto-liberalism (concerned with reform from above). These categories are important in order to remind the reader that within the populism that arose with the agrarian movements in Canada, there were numerous and diverse ideas which affected the ideas and policies that were formed.

In Canada, the dominant class tradition of direct democracy is agrarian populism. The tradition has provided opportunities for many farm movements, from the Dominion Grange to the National Progressives. According to T. Robin Wylie (1991), many of the problems and failures of the more prominent farmers' movements, such as the UFO, have occurred because the farm community did not rise above the many differences that exist within it, since ultimately the farmers in the movements were either crypto-Liberals who wanted either to join with the Liberals or another broad people's party, or radical populists who wanted reform of the system from below and who tried to advocate a positive experiment in group government.

Populism is a term which covers an innumerable number of radical experiments for social change. According to Ernesto Laclau, populism is the extension of popularly made appeals that go beyond class boundaries due to an economic or political crisis, which allows for organizations' appeals for change to be seen as more universal to the entire population. Populism can complement a wide variety of social democratic positions advocating the elimination of inequalities in class (Laclau, 1977; Laycock,

1990). Peter Sinclair identifies the four most common aspects of a populist struggle as being: the worth of political supremacy of the common people; a protest against groups outside of local society; the reform of the capitalist system instead of a social revolution; and the rejection of any intermediate associations between the members and the leaders (Quoted in Wylie, 1991). The philosophies of farm movements in the 1920s, and some who came before, can thus be classified as populist. The agrarian myth supports the moral superiority of the agrarian way of life as does the concept of 'good family values.' The rank-and-file are in control of the farm organizations through forms of direct membership participation. Also, a fierce anti-party mentality existed within the organizations, and most farm movements promoted mechanisms aimed at enhancing voter control of parliamentary representatives while working to create a form of economic direct democracy through such legislation as free trade, a single land tax, and credit reform (Wylie, 1991).

Also significant in the populist movement is the role of state in the conceptualisation of the 'good society.' In most cases, populists argued that the state had a role to play in eliminating the power of those who were the abusers (in agrarian tradition the combines and politicians).⁸ The NFU continues to maintain that there is a strong role for the state to play in protecting family farms and curbing liberal economic free trade.

The populist farmers' organizations, especially those in the West, were often so

⁸For a more detailed discussion of populism Ernesto Laclau, 1977 and David Laycock, 1990 are good sources. For agrarian populism in Canada, Laycock is also an excellent resource as are Robin Wylie, 1991 and S.M. Lipset, 1968.

centred around the issue of tariffs that some critics of the time argued that movements such as 'Progressivism' were one-issue crusades. While this is untrue, these movements supported many issues, the tariff was a grievance that most farmers could identify with, and was often used as part of the framing process for agrarian grievances and as such it quickly rose to prominence. The primary reason for the strength of this issue was one of income and costs. A study done by Marvin McNinnis (Quoted in Sandwell, 1994) investigates the income levels for farms in Ontario in the mid-1800s. He found that by estimating net farm production and household consumption, it became apparent that farms in Ontario were not much beyond subsistence production. He estimated that only about 16% of farms in 1860 would have been 'substantially commercial.'

With this in mind, it becomes clearer why farmers were so opposed to protective tariffs, as opposed to the general anti-free trade sentiment of the NFU today. High tariffs drove up the costs of production (prices of imported goods which would eventually include new forms of farm machinery were all well above the cost their American neighbours paid). This caused the level of debt, farm credit, and the cost of living for farm families to rise as a consequence. Further, since as a group farmers were mainly low or moderate income earners, the tariff did not support them as consumers. Prairie and rural Ontario producers "were the biggest short-term losers to sustained high tariffs. ... their pocket books drove this home, giving their perception of regional injustice and anti-agrarian bias in the national government a major boost" (Laycock, 1990: 30).

Finally, agrarian populism often shares the characteristic with Marxism of decrying the economic logic of capital accumulation coupled with corporate power.

However, as farmers cannot be against owning property, these populist movements often organized themselves around the sentiment that 'big is bad' and combines in any form needed to be prevented (Thompson, 2001). One of the earliest examples of populist farmer organizing in Canada was the Dominion Grange. While it expressed a more crypto-liberal populist sentiment than many of the groups which would follow it, the organization still promoted the concept of popular control over the agriculture industry by farmers, for farmers.

The Dominion Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry

The Dominion Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, more commonly known as the Grange, began in the United States in 1867 and entered Canada in 1872. The rise of the Grange was intrinsically linked to the growing sense among farmers that in order to ensure both better deals in the marketplace and from governments, what was needed was a strong economic and educational organization. The organizations that formed in Canada prior to the 1930s, of which the Grange was the first, were all responding to upheavals being caused in agriculture by the industrial revolution and the reorientation this caused towards urban centres and industry by many elites as well as the government itself. By 1874 there were 16 Granges in Canada, at which time the members voted to separate from the parent American Grange Association (a process that in fact took several years) and renamed themselves the Dominion Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry (Brown, 2003).

The Grange organization exclusively aimed to mobilize farmers as its members, arguing that people who did not 'till the soil' could not sufficiently understand the issues

affecting farmers, which included the reduction of tariffs, trade reciprocity with the United States, federal operation of grain terminals, fewer government subsidies to industries, public ownership of electric power, and the regulation of railways (Gleave, 1991). The Grangers felt that allowing participants who were not farmers into the organization would create conflict within the clubs over contradictory interests. This is a recurring argument in many farmer movements in the past; most fought ferociously against broadening out to other groups that might share similar goals or concerns (Wood, 1975). The reticence by many farm organizations to form alliances with other groups who shared similar goals often affected the ability of the organizations to maintain support and also gain the resources which were needed for a successful sustained protest of the dominant institutions. However, up until the 1930s, farmers for the most part remained isolated within their movement organizations and in some cases (as with the UFO) the division over broadening out or not became a decisive weakness within the organization.

Besides functioning as a political pressure group, the Grange also worked to eliminate the 'middlemen' in farm production. Indeed, due to a reluctance to become directly involved in politics, the Grange was often more active in the commercial sphere than in politics. The organization was an important part of an attempt by farmers to gain more control over their material circumstances. To accomplish this, many local Granges established co-operatives for the direct processing and selling of agricultural products. Several other companies were also formed by the Grangers in order to provide a direct supply of products and services to farmers (Winson, 1993). Some of the larger, more

widespread companies and co-operatives that the Grange was involved in included: the Grange Wholesale Supply Company which dealt in farm implements, household goods, and tools; a fire insurance company with headquarters near Owen Sound; the Ontario People's Salt Manufacturing Company which fought the salt combine and for a time brought the price down from \$1.00 to .60 a barrel; and a life insurance company and a trust and loan society (Brown, 2003).

The Grange was not the only organization setting up co-operatives in the 1800s. Co-operatives helped the primary producers avoid some of the more predatory aspects of early Canadian capitalism, and helped ensure that farmers could receive equitable deals for their produce, and for the inputs they needed in order to farm (Winson, 1993).

In 1879 the Granges reached a membership high of 766 subordinate groups, (650 of which were in Ontario), 51 division Granges and a membership of 31,000. However, shortly thereafter the movement went into decline. The Grange movement suffered for several reasons. One was that it grew at a faster pace than the central organization could deal with. This created fundamental weaknesses that were easy to exploit, as many members lacked a true allegiance to the movement (Wood, 1975). The other serious weakness of the Grange organization was the very factor that gave it such popularity. The use of co-operatives had, by the late 1800s, spiralled out of control. Though these commercial ventures helped farmers for a time, the companies were never controlled by the rank-and-file and often resorted to underhanded business practices to gain market access, often at the expense of other Grange run co-operatives (Brown, 2003).

The Granges were not the first, nor certainly the last, movement to face the

difficulty of uniting a diverse group of people to form one strong group. Like many social movement organizations, the Grange used frames (farm movements most commonly utilize the agrarian and pastoral myths) to create a sense of unity and solidarity among its members. The agrarian myth grew from the belief that farming was the first occupation in the Garden of Eden, and thus the one closest to God. This was expressed in the Grange's ritual speech said at its meetings:

...Agriculture is the first and most noble of all occupations. It is the only one of divine origin....History proves that where agriculture has been fostered by a people, that nature has prospered and reached a high degree of perfection; but where it has been neglected, degeneracy began (Hann, 1974: 7).

By dealing with agriculture in mythic terms, the Grange was able to identify the common role of the farmer in civilization. This provided a common frame from which it could draw, in order to create unity among the farmers in a manner that could overcome the secular and political differences that have always existed in rural Ontario. By placing the farmer within an agrarian myth, the Grange worked to create a cultural unity and a class consciousness among farmers while providing a sense of validity for the actions that farmers were taking against the establishment in Canada (Hann 1975).

As the Dominion Grange worked to effect change, its overriding desire to unite the farmers caused the movement to make one of its founding principles its unwillingness to become directly involved in party politics, or anything else that might cause divisions within its ranks. Granges, while encouraging their members to be politically informed and educated, made it very clear that calling political conventions, and nominating or supporting political candidates, were not allowed (Wood, 1975).

Although the Grange rigidly refused to formally enter organized political life, it often found itself concerned with questions of political economy. While the Grangers had no problem with the capitalists of the day, as they accepted the farmers' need for legitimate businesses, they did desire to place producers and consumers on a more equal footing to ensure that farmers would not be exploited (Wood, 1975). Further to this, the Grange believed that there existed corrupt businesses, mostly monopolies, who had firm control over the established political parties, who in turn produced beneficial legislation for the corporations (Hann 1975). This anti-combine, or anti-monopoly, stance is one that has carried through until today (as will be discussed further below).

Throughout the history of radical farm movements in Canada, the underlying theme that consistently comes to the fore is a strong belief that farmers are being wronged, even forced from their farms, by the monopolies in the sector. So while agricultural radicalism was never explicitly socialist, it created a discourse of resistance towards the capitalist system and those best served by it. While the Grange remained relatively outside the structures of power, it did articulate a strong critique of the alliances it saw being formed between business and those with political power.

By 1907, the Dominion Grange had lost many of its supporters and subordinate Granges throughout Canada. What was left of the organization joined with another small farmers' movement in Ontario, the Farmers' Association of Ontario (FAO). Many of the members of the new FAO would in time move to form and run the United Farmers of Ontario (Wood, 1975).

The Order of the Patrons of Industry

The Order of the Patrons of Industry, much like the Dominion Grange, entered Canada from the United States. It existed between the period of 1889-1902 and grew extremely fast throughout Ontario and Quebec, even entering the West. According to Wood (1975), the Patrons were a few decades before their time, and Canadian farmers were not prepared to accept much of what the movement put forward. While ahead of their time, the Patrons, unlike the Grange organization, recognized that there was a shift taking place in the structures of power which would allow them to be actively involved in politics, and not just as a pressure group.

In the 1891 federal election the Patrons not only endorsed candidates from other parties that they felt represented farm interests, but also ran candidates of their own. The platform that the Patrons put forth was one very similar to the issues that drove the Dominion Grange. They included: a simplification of laws and government, tariffs only on luxury items, and reciprocity with the rest of the world. They also wanted to limit the power of the monopolies within the two established parties (Wood, 1975). Of the platform, the most important planks were reciprocity, tariffs, and monopolies. According to the Patrons, the monopolies were responsible for the continuation of the tariffs and the lack of a reciprocity agreement.

By the 1894 Ontario provincial election, the Patrons had over 50,000 members in Ontario and Quebec and had successfully elected 17 members to the Ontario Legislature. They found support from farmers and (unlike the Grange), also welcomed the support from many labourers who were also fighting to find their place in the industrializing economy. Opportunities were created for mobilization during this period, as the changing

nature of the state and economics led many farmers to recognize that the developing form of capitalism in the late nineteenth century was removing societal powers from the local communities and delivering them to a small minority who resided at the pinnacle of the corporate hierarchy (Hann 1975). For most farmers (still echoed by today's NFU) and labourers, not just the Patrons, this hierarchy was most easily recognized in the combines and monopolies that ran most of the businesses and was typified by the Canadian railway monopoly. As one Patron leader, Master Hilborn, argued in 1881:

The growing power of the railway monopoly is a matter that in the near future will require not only the combined efforts of farmers, but all other industrial organizations to hold them in reasonable check. Experience has shown that the corporate powers that give them existence and enable them to manage these necessary, artificial highways is rapacious; it is marked by encroachments and usurpations, it assumes rights which belong to the people...and with surprising effrontery it warns the people against attempts to recover the rights that they have so innocently yielded (Quoted in Hann, 1975: 15).

Foreshadowing the better known movements to come, both in Ontario and the West, the Patrons consistently demonstrated a strong distaste for the party system in Canada, comparing it to “the anvil of which our chains are forged, [and] partisan politics is the anaesthetic given while it is being done (Hann, 1975: 17).”

The Patrons argued that Canadian politics should consist of a parliament made up of representatives from farmers as well as other productive groups. Instead, the Patrons argued that the House of Commons was filled with two groups of partisan lawyers whose policies were so similar that it hardly mattered who won the election; Conservative or Liberal, the policies would always promote the combines over the small labourer or producer (these sentiments would be echoed by later movements, and not just by farmers)

(Hann, 1975).

After the success in the 1894 provincial election, the Patrons, much like the Grange, began to slow in growth. By 1898, the movement had begun to decline and was finally dissolved in 1902. Many reasons explain why both the Patrons and Granges fell into such rapid decline after what seemed to be great success. Two important reasons were that maintaining communications with the rank and file was difficult for both organizations; as well, the two groups duplicated each other in several areas and caused a split among the farmers when what was needed was a united front. This is a recurring problem, not just for farm movements, but for social movements in general. As argued in the last chapter, alliances are a key part to successful challenges by movements of the existent institutions and elites. Weakness within the ranks will always be exploited by the dominant groups in order to maintain control and promote their own interests, a reality that will be discussed further in reference to the UFO below.

The ultimate goal for both the Patrons and Granges was the creation and protection of a community that would meet the needs of all those who lived within it. This goal was a difficult one, as farmers had little control over the costs of goods bought or the price of goods sold (a fact that reverberates into the present). Thus, farmers formed social movement organizations which acted as pressure groups or as elected representatives within Legislatures, protesting against the economic control of the combines and fighting to get the state to place more control into the hands of the family farmer. Failure to achieve this objective meant that all other aims would never be reached. The desire to protect the family farm and the community that it should foster and

be fostered by is still echoed in the precepts of the NFU.

Western Grain Grower Unions

The Grain Grower movements in Western Canada began as a protest to the 'elevator combines' and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) monopoly (Wood, 1975). The first association was created in 1902; collectively the unions would help inspire the creation of the UFO and eventually lead to the founding of the NFU. The first Grain Grower Association came out of the growing transportation crisis in the West. Farmers in the West were dependent on the CPR to provide rail cars in order to enable them to ship their grain to the markets in Ontario and the United States. In 1902, after a bumper harvest the farmers were faced with a serious problem when the CPR did not, and would not, provide the number of cars that were needed to ship out all the grain before winter. Added to this the belief of most farmers that the CPR was in collusion with the grain marketers in setting the price of grain artificially low, and the anti-monopoly and anti-government sentiment began to violently rise to the surface (Gleave, 1991; Wood, 1975).

The first of the unions to form was the Territorial Grain Growers Association (TGGA) in what is now northern Saskatchewan. In 1903 the movement spread to Manitoba and the Manitoba Grain Growers Association (MGGA) was created. These associations worked to pressure the government in far off Ottawa. The MGGA also set about cutting out the middle man and taking control of the profits for the farmer by creating a farmer run grain consortium called the Grain Growers Grain Company

(GGGC)⁹ in 1904 (Wood, 1975). The GGGC was created in response to the price fixing that many grain companies did in order to gain a higher profit at the expense of the Western farmers. The company acted as a commission business on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange (WGE), it would receive the cars given to its members and then sell the grain on their behalf. It was a successful venture, although it had a rough first few years and had to fight the WGE every step of the way (Gleave 1991). The Western farm movements were relatively successful in their attempts to lobby the government; however, anger at price fixing and the CPR's apparent disregard of most of the legislation that the farmers had successfully lobbied for in Ottawa led to a slow simmering resentment that would come to a boil in the years after the First World War under the banner of the National Progressive Movement.

The three movements discussed above (especially the Grange and Patrons) built foundations for the UFO. It was this organization discussed below, that the radical critique of the early 1900s capitalist system in Ontario became refined, and the organization was successful in taking advantage of the crisis in farming, as well as the Great War. The growing crisis of World War One galvanized many farmers and created a framing process and mobilizing structure that would succeed in gaining political success for the UFO. While defined by their radical populism, the structures and nature of the state provided the best opportunity for success through political election in Ontario.

⁹The Company was in effect created by E.A. Partridge, but after a conflict with the MGE in 1906 he gave the presidency over to T.A. Crerar in 1907. Crerar would go on to lead the National Progressive party in the 1921 federal election before leaving politics after the split with the Alberta wing began to grow.

However, the frame of agrarian populism also led to internal cleavages over the direction the organization should move once the immediate success of election was assured. This is an issue that would not be solved until the 1930s and the creation of the CCF, which is discussed below.

United Farmers of Ontario

By 1913, within the space of ten years, three farmer organizations in Ontario had withered away (the Granges, the Patrons, and the Farmers Association of Ontario). This left a number of activist farmers with no organization to turn to, and in late 1913 several farmer activists (E.C. Drury, W.C. Good, and J.J. Morrison) met to discuss this turn of events. The Western Associations' relative success and longevity were discussed as possible solutions; however farming in Ontario called for a different type of structure. The diverse range of farms in Ontario, along with sectional interests and a deeply rooted Conservatism in the province, complicated any attempt to create a unified movement or organization (Wood, 1975; Winson, 1993). It was during these meetings that the idea of creating the United Farmers of Ontario evolved.

The UFO was formally established in 1914 as an organization made up of distinct local branches which could easily embrace any willing Farmers' Institute club, Grange, or other accredited body. The founders believed this would allow for the diversity that existed within the Ontario farming community to flourish within a unified farmers' organization. The UFO grew quickly, its membership incited by several key government policies in the last years of the Great War. By 1915 the UFO had 2000 members, and in 1916 it showed its teeth in response to the move to full conscription by the federal

government. The policy change came just after a spring in which farmers were urged to prove their loyalties by planting more crops for less return. Shortly after crops were in, they were informed that those previously exempted (young rural men) would begin to be conscripted (Badgley, 2000).

The UFO criticized full conscription for several reasons. First, they did not want to lose their sons (important non-waged labour) to the war, especially after having just planted more crops than normal in support of the war effort. The second reason dealt with the belief of farmers that they were being burdened with a disproportionate contribution to the war effort. At the 1917 UFO convention, W.C. Good expressed this sentiment when he declared:

Since human life is more valuable than gold, this convention most solemnly protests against any proposal looking to the conscription of men for battle, while leaving wealth exempt from the same measure of enforced service. It is a manifest and glaring injustice that Canadian mothers should be compelled to surrender boys around whom their dearest hopes in life are centred while plutocrats, fattening on special privileges and war business, are left in undisturbed possession of their riches (Quoted in Winson, 1993: 28).

Much as the Patrons of Industry had two decades earlier, the UFO found a focus for their movement in anti-combine and anti-government sentiment (see appendix 2.2).

The legislation providing for the conscription of farm labourers in 1916 disillusioned many farmers and led them to mobilized against the dominant political powers that they had previously been more accepting of. As UFO President Halbert declared in 1916, “government by the people is a myth. The real rulers of Canada are the knighted heads of combines...the individual farmer, standing alone, has not a chance against them. Farmers possess but do not control the biggest business asset in Canada”

(Quoted in Wood 1975: 278).

In early 1918, farmers from Ontario and Quebec came together to demonstrate in Ottawa against conscription. While Prime Minister Borden did meet with the delegation, he refused to allow them to speak in the House of Commons. This rebuff by Borden reflected the sentiment shared by many farmers that the state was no longer interested in cooperative dialogue between the government and polity. This realisation helped to politicise and galvanize many farmers; most of those from Ontario turned to the UFO for a solution. Subsequently, farmers in Ontario (the rank and file of the UFO), spontaneously began nominating and running farmer candidates in by-elections and winning. The success of these 'farmer candidates' helped increase membership dramatically and led the central office, in preparation for the 1919 provincial election campaign, to create a vague platform which included such issues as rural depopulation, public debt, party patronage, creating a rural Eden, better roads, rural education, control of provincial forests, control over hydro-electric development, introduction of principles of direct legislation, and proportional representation. The success of farmer candidates and the growing interest in the UFO platform provided farmers with the conviction that they could in fact affect the politics of the nation (Johnston, 1986).

It was the provincial election of 1919 that witnessed the UFO's famous 'drive' into politics, marked by a startling success at the polls and the UFO forming a Farmer-Labour minority government, headed by E.C. Drury as Premier (Wood, 1975). The farmers were not prepared to win this election; they in fact were aiming to elect only enough candidates to form a pressure group within Queens's Park (Johnston, 1986). The

organization had been swept into power by a rising tide of grassroots protest by farmers throughout the province. Success at the polls was also due to significant rural vote splitting (the UFO won its 44 seats with only 22% of the popular vote), a great deal of luck in the partisan contests of many ridings, and also because widespread disillusionment with the two old parties (Laycock, 1990).

Unexpectedly, the UFO formed a minority government, allying its 44 newly elected MPPs with the 11 elected members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP). While this coalition farmer-labour government only lasted three and a half years, and was rife with internal conflict, it still managed to bring the province up to the national level with respect to social laws, including mother's allowances, guaranteed minimum wage for women and girls, protection for children born out of wedlock, and a reorganization of the department of health in order to provide better care (Winson, 1993).

Almost immediately after the election, a schism developed between the rank-and-file membership and those running the government. The success of UFO candidates in the election was based almost entirely upon the local clubs. The central organization of the UFO had very little to do with the actual campaigns, besides producing the platform and sending out the main leaders to do a little speaking. For the most part the provincial organization distanced itself from the local contests. Much as the Progressives would do in 1921, the UFO ran a campaign of independents more than that of a party. This was their strength, but it would also prove to be their greatest weakness when the rank-and-file became alienated from the central organization after the government was formed.

The defeat of the UFO-ILP government in the 1923 election was caused by more

than inexperience and parliamentary failures. The alienation of the rank-and-file came about through the policies of the Drury government and its use of old-form party practices (cronyism, patronage, corruption and a general sacrifice of ideals for political pragmatism). Shortly after the election, disputes began to emerge between the government and central office and between the central office and the local clubs. According to David Laycock, the UFO was fundamentally weakened due to the “devastating contest between the principles of radical democratic and crypto-Liberal populism, with the later dominating through (Premier) E.C. Drury” (1990: 70).

One of the most contentious issues that deeply divided the farmers was the ‘broadening out’ of the party to embrace other groups that might have shared the farmers’ values. Premier Drury was a proponent of this policy, but others, especially J.J. Morrison, General Secretary of the UFO¹⁰, saw this as an unacceptable compromise and believed it would accomplish nothing other than the creation of another ‘Liberal’ party that would quickly degenerate into patronage and cronyism. These, Morrison argued, were the very things that the farmers had gone into politics to put a stop to. Drury believed that broadening out would allow the participation of like minded groups who up until then were prevented from joining, due to the UFO’s narrow class appeal. He argued that by maintaining its occupational identity, the UFO ran the risk of being nothing more

¹⁰ Morrison was offered the premiership after the UFO victory in 1919, but turned it down. Together with Henry Wise Wood in Alberta, J.J. Morrison felt strongly that the practices of the party system were fatally blocking the emergence of a truly democratic political process, one that would allow the farm community a voice in keeping with their numbers...Morrison was tireless in his efforts to increase the class consciousness of farmers and thereby enhance their ability to advance their interests in society (Winson, 1993: 33).

than a minority body. Morrison challenged Drury's policy of 'broadening out' at the annual convention of the UFO and was able to defeat the plan with the support of the rank-and-file, who agreed that farmers had entered politics to win justice for their industry and economy by means of agricultural representation, and that they should keep to their original course (Wood, 1975; Winson, 1993). This confrontation between two of the most powerful players in the UFO left deep scars that proved to be irreparable and costly at the next election.

The 1923 election proved how severe the cracks that had formed within the UFO had become. Along with the broadening out issue there was also internal strife over links with the Liberals; many farmers turned back to their conservative roots when voting in the election. Only 17 of the 44 UFO MPPs were returned and the UFO was at the beginning of the end, though it would limp along until the mid 1940s.

The fate of the UFO is similar to many movements that have tried to challenge the ruling establishment. As would happen later with both the Progressives and the CCF, the established parties used their power from within civil society to retain and reclaim the power it might have lost to an upstart party such as the UFO. As Bryan Palmer notes, capital, and its agents, are remarkably adept at presenting a world view that successfully buries its interests under a blanket of benevolence and sacrifice for the greater good of all. It does this by highlighting the supposed reciprocities of social relationships instead of their inequalities (Quoted in Badgley, 2000).

In such a manner, with the utilization of celebratory leaders, financial backing, tradition, and the mainstream press, hegemonic forces easily frame acts of contestation as

marginal agitation, done by those who are unwilling to deal with issues through 'traditional' means. Activists such as members of the UFO are branded as misguided rabble rousers trying to create a mythical utopian future. Labelled as such, they are stripped of their legitimacy and relegated to the dustbin of history. In the face of such an attack the rank-and-file can quickly become demoralised. In the case of the UFO, supporters became disillusioned when it became obvious that their vote could only be used for strategic purposes, rather than in direct support for a candidate that upheld their principles (Badgley, 2000).

Canadian Council of Agriculture

Along with activities on the provincial stage, the UFO also participated in a national federation of agricultural organizations, the Canadian Council of Agriculture (CCA). This organization was an attempt to create a unified national agrarian voice. The main purpose of the CCA was to apply national pressure to the federal government on issues such as reducing tariffs.

The CCA was the only national voice for farmers of that time, and as an umbrella organization represented upwards of 65,000 farmers in the west and Ontario. The Council's efforts create a national focus to the issues and grievances that were important to its member organizations culminated in 1917, when the CCA produced the "Farmers Platform" which, as appendix 2.3 demonstrates, centred mainly on the need to reform the Canadian tariff legislation. At the 1919 yearly convention of the CCA, there was a strong vote among the delegates to escalate the fight against the tariffs. A year later this

facilitated the birth of the Progressive Party¹¹ (Winson, 1993). The CCA would continue to represent farm organizations until 1935, when it would be transformed into the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), a federated national umbrella organization which still exists today, and is discussed in chapter four.

Cooperative Commonwealth Federation

A few remaining Progressive candidates continued to be elected, both federally and provincially in Saskatchewan, until the 1930s. They, along with two socialist members from Winnipeg (one being J.S. Woodsworth, who would act as a lynch pin between farmer and labour interests), and a similar farmers' group from Alberta joined together in the House of Commons to form a small independent left-wing party. The 'Ginger Group,' as it was called, kept the dream of a third party alive and would help form the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in the 1930s. The formation of the CCF would come about in 1932, when Saskatchewan farmers and the socialist movement united in a national attempt to establish socialism in Canada.

¹¹The Progressives had many of the same aims and grievances as the UFO. The party emerged on the Prairies during the 1920s under the auspices of various farmer organizations. The Progressive movement left behind an important legacy in Canadian society, a legacy that proves the possibility of success for political action outside the boundaries of the established political parties. The movement also highlighted the importance of a distinctly radical platform in discouraging co-optation of framing processes by dominant groups (in this case Mackenzie King's Liberals). It also contributed significantly in the creation of a class consciousness among farmers. Many of the radical thinkers such as J.J. Morrison and H.W. Wood helped to not only infuse a class consciousness within the movements, but also to illuminate the connections between the interests and grievances of labour with those of the farmers. While a full discussion of the Progressive Party is beyond the scope of this thesis, Wood, 1975; Winson, 1993; Young, 1990; and Sharp, 1971 are excellent sources of information on the organization.

The CCF was a culmination of the radical agrarian populist movements that had been agitating for structural change since the late 1800s. That it arose during perhaps the two greatest crises in the 20th Century (the Great Depression and ‘Dust Bowl’ drought in the prairies) certainly provided much of its mobilization capacity. However, it also managed to take advantage of the shifting nature of the state and elite alliances as they scrambled to deal with the crises. Further to this, as will be discussed below, the CCF finally managed to successfully make alliances with other like-minded organizations and individuals. It did so by creating a framing process that linked the grievances of farmers to those of the common labourer, which in turn created the possibility for greater mobilization and a better chance at success.

The new CCF was organized primarily as a federation of provincial parties, each of which had its own approach to socialism and politics. While working together, each group promised not to interfere with the activities of the other provincial sections (Lipset, 1968). Part of the impetus for the creation of the CCF, particularly in Saskatchewan where it first experienced electoral success, was due to an incident in 1921 when the more militant farmers in Saskatchewan split from the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association (SGGA) to form the Farmers’ Union (in 1926 the two organizations would come back together as the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section [UFC-SS]). It would be this group that would lead the drive towards the creation of the CCF as a socialist farmers party ten years later.

Of all the actors who worked to bring together the different elements (radical farm organizations, labour parties, and various social thinkers and politicians), it was J.S.

Woodsworth who would successfully bridge the gap between farm and labour issues. He was a longtime socialist Member of Parliament from Winnipeg and was trusted by both farmers and labour alike, which helped him to create a strong alliance in a manner that farm organizations had failed to do in the past (Winson, 1993).

In 1933, the UFC-SS organized a convention that brought together many regional farm organizations to discuss future possibilities for political action. It was here that the delegates decided to form a national political party, the Canadian Commonwealth Federation. The Regina convention was the turning point for the farm and labour movements in Canada. It was the first time that agrarians had acted to become part of a national radical movement that was allied with urban labour. By doing so the organizers were able to frame agrarian grievances through a discourse of class consciousness and openly attack the economic structure of the nation (Lipset, 1968; Winson, 1993). The party's farm and labour alliance was aided by the growing crisis of the Great Depression and severe drought on the Prairies. Both issues (especially the Depression) impacted on farmers as well as labour and helped to radicalise both groups around common problems of livelihood and income protection.

The Manifesto that was created at the Regina convention indicates the direction of the CCF's political agenda:

We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supercede unregulated private enterprise and competition and in which genuine democratic self-government based on economic equality will be possible (Source Book, 1959: 418).

In regards to agriculture, as appendix 2.4 illustrates, the Manifesto accepted family farming as the basis for agricultural production and called for reforms that would make the system more viable. Such reforms included ensuring security of tenure on the land for farmers, provisions such as crop insurance, as well as the call an expansion of co-operatives, and a system of both import and export marketing boards.

Shortly after the Regina Convention, the party entered its first election in the province of Saskatchewan. It was a bitter campaign in which the Conservatives and Liberals used the sympathetic press to offer up a daily dose of vitriol against the CCF and the catastrophe that would ensue should the party be elected. The results of the election were a success, considering the circumstances. The CCF received 30% of the rural vote and, in combination with the Social Credit Party (another emergent Western farm populist party), managed to draw almost one-half of the rural electoral vote from the two established parties (Young, 1969). According to Lipset, the reaction to the election results would fundamentally alter the CCF. In order to take better advantage of the shifting nature of state policies and to better appeal to civil society, the party shifted strategies, from radical socialist state transformation towards a less far-reaching goal of a compromise between market and state and strong domestic protections of society. The party also formed an alliance with the Social Credit in Saskatchewan in order to defeat the Liberal government. Lipset (1968) argues that these reforms changed the framing of the CCF from one that called for an offensive attack on capitalism and its institutions to a more conciliatory frame of a political party applying pressure in order to bring about agrarian and labour reforms (this was particularly the case on the federal level where the

CCF used its influence as a third party to affect federal labour and agriculture policy).

Throughout the late 1930s and 1940s, the redirected CCF's popularity continued to rise with electoral victories in federal by-elections, and in Saskatchewan under its impressive leader Tommy Douglas in 1944.

The CCF was able to successfully create an alliance between farmer and labour organizations. This continued even after 1961, when the party joined with other labour unions to form the New Democratic Party (NDP). The alliance was successful because the groups had come together and identified themselves as an ideologically distinct movement, and so could integrate both labour and farm issues. Unlike its Progressive predecessor, this gave it protection from being absorbed by the Liberal Party and the ability to maintain a drawn out resistance program.

Reforms made by the CCF in Saskatchewan, including instituting universal health insurance and pressuring for farm marketing boards, were important parts of the evolution of the Canadian state. The party aided in the creation of the embedded liberal system, which promoted a strong role for the state in domestic economic affairs (embedded liberalism is discussed in a later chapter).

Earlier organizations, such as the Patrons and the Grange lacked a strong direction and purpose, while the UFO carried a fatal flaw in its conception and execution of its collective action. The CCF, however, was able to avoid the internal strife between those who wished to protect the purity of the movement's agrarian roots, and those who wished to broaden out the base of the movement by both providing for the different interests through policy, and utilizing the skills of leaders such as Woodsworth and Douglas

(Winson, 1993).¹²

Conclusion

The agrarian organizations of the past arose due to certain factors that facilitated their mobilization. Times of economic crisis and political change provided political opportunities for farmers to form strong organizations which agitated for change among political groups and elites. As well, these organizations often took advantage of groups that had come before them, using pre-existing organization and resources in order to gain full access to the arising opportunities. The UFO and CCF are both excellent examples of organizations using existing frameworks, and incorporating other organizations into the newly formed group. In order to successfully take advantage of rising opportunities and preexisting organization and resources, these agrarian organizations first had to command a sentiment of solidarity and moral commitment among individual activists.

The main framing process that these historical organizations utilized was radical populism. This framework created common grievances surrounding the lack of power that the 'common people' held in Canada and the need to reform the capitalist system to better provide for individuals such as farmers. These grievances were most commonly expressed in the anti-tariff sentiment that existed well into the post World War Two era. Often linked to the populist frame was the use of the agrarian myth, which built a sense of cohesion between farmers spread over diverse production systems and farm types. What is interesting about the agrarian myth is that it points to the subjugation of an entire

¹²The full history of the CCF is too broad for this study. For further reading on the policies and history of the party please see: Lipset, 1968 and Young, 1969.

economy by the capitalist push for urbanization and industrial development. Many farmers believed that they participated in God's intended vocation and that those forced into the cities lived a miserable life of servitude, not to mention the dirty and crowded living conditions they suffered (Badgley, 2000). The criticisms often made by the farmer organizations of the city were not necessarily mythical, however, but were based on the observation of a system that was failing them time and time again.

The early farm organizations promoted a radical critique of the political and economic system of the day. They worked to create new societal and economic structures based on their conceptions of culture and ideology. In doing this, these farm organizations presented a radical critique of the society that was being created in the first half of the 20th century. The radical nature of many historical farm organizations was in part due to the increasingly unresponsive nature of the federal government towards agrarian grievances. The lack of legitimate political representation and recourse caused many farm based organizations to question the very legitimacy of the dominant political groups. A litany of disappointments such as the conscription reversal, the unavailability of railcars, and the failure to institute free trade contributed to the growing radical discourse of Canadian farmers. Linked to this, there grew an intense and sincere belief that the 'big interests' (which included the capitalist class and combines, media, and old style parties) had seized total control of the political agenda and were taking it in a direction antithetical to the interests of farmers.

One of the main tenets of crypto-liberal populism is that the capitalist system should be reformed, not overthrown (Laycock, 1990). This sentiment often extended into

agrarian agitation for political change as well. Indeed, farm organizations, even at their most radical, have often tried to maintain a relationship with the establishment (it is true that this issue caused divisions within many organizations, see above). At times the agrarian organizations have even become a part of the dominant institutions. This association has affected the manner in which farmers protest changes in government policies and economic hardship. The role the state has played in ensuring the livelihood of the farmers in the past limits the willingness of farmers to radically question the structures of the state. This was most apparent during the Keynesian period, which as a system of embedded liberalism allowed for greater involvement by the state in agriculture. This in turn fostered strong relationships between farm organizations and the governing institutions. In fact, farm organizations were an important part of the creation of the Canadian welfare state as it was between the 1950s and 1970s. The institution of embedded liberalism was in many respects a culmination of the agrarian and labour agitation that had been building since the later 1800s. Although this system has since been dismantled, for a time it provided a protective barrier for farmers, labourers, and citizens from the stark competition of unfettered capitalism.

The radical discourse of earlier movements that helped to create the Canadian welfare state in turn limited the necessity for radical discourse by later agrarian organizations. This is certainly reflected in the actions of the CFA and OFA today, and even in some of the strategies of the NFU. However, I would argue that this organization is returning to a more radical critique of state institutions in the face of growing liberalization and globalization.

An historical analysis of farm movements in Canada is an important part of placing the NFU within a context of agrarian activism. This can further provide an understanding of the way contemporary farm organizations such as the NFU have altered their focus and policies in the face of globalization and the changing agricultural economy (both of which will be discussed in a later chapter). One argument often made by farm organizations and carried forward by the NFU today, is that the development of an urban society was not and is not an inevitable matter, but implies a political choice. This argument is important to the NFU in relation to the sense of inevitability that liberal economics places on the process of globalization. Farmers across Canada in the past rose up when they saw their way of life being pushed to the margins of society, arguing that the new system was too socially expensive to sustain. Most of these movements managed to affect policy, and their beliefs and sentiments can still be found in the organization and resistance of many social movements in Canada, including the NFU.

In the past two decades the political system in Canada, and internationally, has shifted fundamentally away from embedded liberalism to a free market liberal economic system. This is causing new political opportunity structures to arise and creating entire new arenas for resistance towards such issues as free trade. The NFU is taking advantage of these new opportunities on both the domestic and international level. This in turn has caused it to broaden its framing process in order to incorporate issues that affect more than just Canadian farmers. The next chapter will outline the effects of global and regional trade agreements on the agricultural sector as well as provide a brief outline of the shift in Canadian agricultural policies. This will provide a context for the creation of

new political opportunity structures both domestically and internationally. Further, the discussion will help to illuminate how the NFU is using the new opportunities to mobilize on a wider scale than in the past, and how the organization's farming processes are being affected by the broadening of its focus to a regional and international level.

Chapter 3

Growing for Export: The Articulation of Agriculture in the Neo-liberal Economic System

In the past few decades the discourse of the NFU has become more radical and more focussed in its tactics and goals. The fundamental shift in both national and international policies in agriculture has created greater opportunities for the coalescence of groups opposed to globalization. The recent upheavals in Canadian agriculture have resulted in a broad space from which the NFU is successfully mobilizing farmers. The changing system has also caused the NFU to shift away from the characteristics of many of the farm organizations that came before it, particularly in its anti-free trade stance, more radical discourse, and growing international linkages. As a result, the NFU has broadened its framing processes, list of grievances, and alternative solutions to the industrial agriculture system existent today.

This chapter will discuss how free trade agreements and other international institutions (the WTO, FTA, NAFTA, and Proposed FTAA) are further dismantling past compromises between businesses, markets, and nations. This will help to illuminate how these changes in both domestic and international systems have created political opportunity structures that have broadened the arena for more radical framing processes of organizations such as the NFU. As the agricultural system in Canada becomes increasingly globalized through trade agreements, the shift in state structures and government focus is creating new political opportunity structures for resistance to free trade. Specifically, the effects of free trade agreements since the 1980s and the

replacement of embedded liberalism with a free market ideology has provided the NFU (among other organizations) with an opportunity to become more active on a broader range of issues. Further, the restrictions which these agreements place on domestic trade policy has facilitated the growth of a radical discourse within the NFU by reducing its ability to influence government policy through state institutions.

In order to create a context for why the NFU is mobilizing against Canadian policy and free trade, it is also necessary to understand the policies that AAFC has enacted since the creation of the FTA and WTO. While the NFU's policies will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, it is important to first understand the state policies that have created the opportunity structures that the NFU is using to mobilize and frame issues in an increasingly radical manner.

As will be shown below, free trade has created the economic upheavals and been accompanied by the political changes necessary for movement mobilization. Further, like many organizations that have come before, the NFU has been able to utilize preexisting organization and resources in order to take advantage of the arising opportunities. Finally, by taking advantage of these new opportunity structures, the NFU has begun to use framing processes that apply to more than just farming communities. Indeed, it has taken its fight to the international stage and in so doing has incorporated far broader issues than the price of wheat and rural culture into its discourse. The NFU is creating new alliances with other civil society movements and is working to create solidarity networks between farmers, labourers, and consumers throughout the world.

In particular, this chapter will focus on how the shifting of political structures

from embedded liberalism to a system of free trade has created opportunity structures for the mobilization of the NFU. The place of agriculture within the Post-World War Two GATT system and the liberal compromise which supported it will be discussed first. This system allowed nations to enact policies that protected agriculture from the competition of international markets and TNCs. In the 1980s, however, this system began to change, moving away from a liberal compromise toward a liberal free market. As is further discussed below, this has fundamentally altered the agriculture sector in Canada by imposing the rules and regulations of the WTO, the FTA, the NAFTA, and the proposed FTAA on domestic policies. This will provide a basis for the discussion of Canadian agricultural policy which follows and help to illuminate why the Canadian government is directing the farming sector towards greater liberalization and how this is creating mobilization opportunities for movement organizations such as the NFU.

The Liberal Compromise and Agriculture¹³

According to John Ruggie (1982), the international economic system that was created after the Second World War in the West was characterized by a compromise between economic liberalization the role of governments in the domestic spheres of economic and social policy in providing ‘cushions’ for their citizens. This compromise was created through the GATT as a multilateral framework predicated on domestic intervention. The liberal compromise, Ruggie believes, was based on Karl Polanyi’s

¹³A detailed discussion of embedded liberalism is beyond the scope of this study. For further information please see John Ruggie (1982; 1995). For the concepts which the theory is based upon works by John Maynard Keynes are the primary source for the ‘middle way.’ Karl Polanyi’s *Great Transformation* also deals with the concepts of embedded markets in society.

distinction between embedded and disembedded economic orders in his seminal work *The Great Transformation*. Ruggie also points to Polanyi's argument that *laissez-faire* was in actual fact a planned and government supported system. However, the concepts that lie at the heart of embedded liberalism also echo through much of John Maynard Keynes' theories, and indeed within the system which he helped craft in the immediate post-war years.

The system successfully maintained the 'middle way' between the two extremes of total opposition to economic liberalization, and liberal internationalist orthodoxy, which wished to recreate the earlier free market system with the Dollar replacing the Pound as the only alteration (Ruggie, 1995). The system was not an easy one to forge, however. Even with the effects of the Great Depression and the inter-war period still fresh in many minds, consensus was hard to find, and did not happen without substantial compromise. However, there was a widespread agreement, which does not exist as today, that, as Keynes argued:

To suppose that there exists some smoothly functioning automatic mechanism of adjustment which preserves equilibrium if only we trust to methods of *laissez-faire* is a doctrinaire delusion which disregards the lessons of historical experience without having behind it the support of sound theory (Keynes, Quoted in Ruggie, 1982: 388).

Since the 1970s there has been a disembedding of liberalism and a move away from the compromise between the market and domestic policies and towards a system where the market has dominion. One cause for this disembedding in the system is that the rationale for embedded liberalism, having arisen during the Great Depression, has faded from memory, along with the teachings of Keynes and his contemporaries. Further,

as discussed below, agreements such as the NAFTA and the WTO promote disembodied liberalism and the international economy over domestic concerns and the policies of nations (Kirshner, 1999).

The consequence, as will be shown later with Canada, is a struggle between the two extremes. Thus, Canadian agricultural policies have embraced the discourse of international free trade, but must now struggle to provide some form of support or cushion, even if only a minimal one. Without the grand compromise of embedded liberalism, individual nations are left to create their own forms of compromise (whether it be anti-dumping regulations, non-tariff barriers, income supports, emergency relief, etc.). Many of these actions, while necessary for domestic stability, are in direct contravention of the liberal economic trade regimes and further disrupt the workings of the economic system.

The disembedding of the liberal compromise and the subsequent growth of free trade has created new opportunity structures for movement organizations on both the domestic and international level. The compromise between liberal economics and the state that arose after the Second World War provided nations with the right to enforce domestic policies aimed at creating a stable economic environment for its citizens. However, beginning with the Uruguay Round GATT negotiations, this system of embedded liberalism began to be dismantled.

The GATT Trading System - 1948 to 1995

In the post-war period, one of the greatest articulations of the system of embedded liberalism was witnessed in the creation of the GATT. The GATT was created

to facilitate free trade while providing the opportunities for domestic policy to provide safety nets where unfettered capitalism failed to preform (as it had in the 1930s). The trading regime it facilitated was crucial to postwar international trade, even with its internalized weaknesses. It was created in 1948, and existed until 1995, when the final round of the GATT trade talks produced the WTO. The GATT was based on the principles of a form of multilateralism¹⁴ consistent with the creation of domestic stability through the embedded liberal compromise. The Agreement also prohibited quantitative restrictions, unless used as safeguards for the balance of payments that were tied to domestic policies acting to secure full employment. These safeguards could also be enacted in regards to agricultural trade, if they were used in conjunction with domestic price support systems. While substantial reductions in tariffs and other barriers to trade were called for, they were not obligatory so 'emergency actions' to support domestic producers were allowed (Ruggie, 1982).

The rules of the GATT, coupled with embedded liberalism, created opportunity structures in the West that are entirely different from today. Perhaps the largest difference was that the rules were structured so that civil society could more easily take part in the domestic decision making process. As such, movement organizations like the CCF and NFU were able to work within the institutions to create new policies. Further, the GATT allowed national governments to control the regulation of the high domestic

¹⁴Multilateralism means that all trade rules were applied without discrimination, and bilateral and trading blocs were prohibited with only a few exceptions. The system was also based on a concept of general reciprocity, where rules and liberalization were established based on mutual and balanced concessions (Gilpin, 2001).

tariffs (in the West) which protected the farming sector from international competition. All this necessarily directed the focus and framing of farm organizations toward domestic issues and governments, as this was where the opportunity structures lay. These factors promoted an entirely different framing process, one more concerned with influencing the existing system, rather than with fundamentally changing it.

When the GATT took effect in 1948, it failed to liberalize agricultural trade in any fundamental manner. This was mainly because most countries at the negotiating table were unwilling to lose the right to subsidise agriculture domestically. Most importantly, at the time of negotiation, political ideology and memories of the Great Depression united in a common understanding that the right to provide food security domestically needed to be ensured at the risk of a domestic crisis. These nations fought to maintain control over vital social and economic sectors such as agriculture that might have been threatened under freer competition (Kirshner, 1999). Thus, all that the agreement managed was to prohibit countries from erecting food import barriers unless the amount of food produced behind the protection was limited first. Even this modest restriction met with strong resistance; in order to win approval, the agreement allowed for a loophole to be created. In essence this allowed for any nation that wished (and many did) to pass a domestic law declaring its intentions to not abide by the GATT rules, and thus side-step the restriction (Wilson, 1990).

The Americans were the first to take advantage of this waiver in 1955, and they were soon followed by most other food-producing nations in the West, as it was more advantageous to put protections based on price supports and import barriers in place

domestically. According to Barry Wilson (1990), this culminated in a trade and subsidy war in 1985 between the US and the European Community. The trade war led to growing pressure in the late 1980s to reduce government support for agriculture in order to end the conflict. When politicians and economists looking for ways to liberalize agriculture turned to the GATT for a solution, the inherent weakness of the institution was revealed. The GATT rules for agriculture had been so fundamentally circumvented that they were of little use in solving the trade disputes. Thus, in 1986 when the Uruguay Round of the GATT was launched, it was with an eye on working to increase the liberalization within the agriculture sector (Wilson, 1990).

The GATT was not a formal international organization, nor was it powerful enough to act as one. Through the seven rounds of trade negotiations (which gradually lowered the level of tariffs substantially), the trade regime managed to support and promote trade liberalization (Held et al., 1999). However, the regime proved relatively powerless to resist the non-tariff barriers that many OECD countries instituted, particularly against imports of agricultural, cultural, and textile products and by the mid-1980s, the GATT trade regime was no longer adequately supporting the growing global liberal economy. The oligopolistic competition, the scale of the economies, and the breakdown of the multilateral system through greater integration among future EU members caused the international system to outgrow the rules and structures of the trading regime.

Canada, throughout the term of the GATT, remained a strong supporter of US promoted trade policy. In the 1980s, part of this policy direction was due to the ideology

of the pro-free trade Conservative government. However, Canada also needed to ensure that the US markets remained open to Canadian imports and prevent a return to tariff levels of the 1930s and the trade war that exploded in 1985 seemed to be a step in that direction. As such, Canada's stance for lower subsidies and greater free trade was a way to prevent heavy American tariffs from deepening the recession in the Canadian economy.

Thus, In 1986, as the last round of trade talks of the GATT began, Canada joined the Cairns Group¹⁵ with an aim of promoting 'fair trade.' This group of nations began calling for a halt to the trade war between the US and European Community and the creation of an agreement on long-term reform of international agriculture trade policies, which included trade distorting subsidies. While Canada was a strong supporter of the Reagan administration, and called for the removal of subsidies and tariffs (though perhaps not at the pace the US wished to set), the Mulroney government did have several demands that were antithetical to the American position. Mainly, Canada wanted to retain the right to supply manage border controls for the dairy and poultry and egg sectors and any other areas in which a majority of farmers wanted to adhere to the discipline of supply management. These policies came about mainly because the free-trade proponents in the Conservative government had promised the dairy and poultry sector that their

¹⁵ The Cairns Group is an organization of 17 'medium' sized agricultural exporters. It includes: Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, Australia, Costa Rica, Philippines, Bolivia, Guatemala, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, Malaysia, Uruguay, Chile, and New Zealand. The Group's mandate includes: deep cuts to all tariffs (including tariff peaks), removal of tariff escalation, the elimination of all trade-distorting domestic subsidies, the elimination of export subsidies, and clear rules to prevent circumvention of export subsidy commitments.

interests would be promoted at the GATT talks in order to gain electoral support (Skogstad, 1987).

Disembedding the Liberal Compromise - The WTO

The Uruguay Round of GATT was completed in 1993. It initiated a fundamental shift in state action and in elite ideology and tactics. Soon to be fully dismantled was the system of embedded liberalism, replaced with one based firmly on the ideological belief that economies must be freed from all domestic constraints and TNCs given the freedom needed to take full advantage of the globalizing markets. This in turn created a whole new arena of political opportunity structures, on a national, intergovernmental, and transnational level.

Outside of NAFTA, the most important agreement that affects agriculture in Canada is the WTO's AoA produced during the Uruguay Round of the GATT talks. What came out of the Uruguay Round was an agreement that imposed commitments on all signatory nations covering nearly all import and export border measures while also applying to domestic support systems. The AoA focuses on three major areas: market access, export competition, and domestic support. The effects of changes in these three areas are easily identifiable in the Canadian system. It includes formalised rules regarding market access, the removal of non-tariff barriers, and the commitment to bound tariffs¹⁶ as replacements. Signatory nations also agreed to refrain from creating new non-tariff measures (something that the US and EU have not strictly followed in the past) in

¹⁶A bound tariff is a commitment made by nations at the WTO setting out the maximum tariff rate that a member will charge on a good (Canada [DFAIT], Nov. 2002).

order to ensure free access to domestic markets. The AoA is also set up to prevent new export subsidies while working to decrease those already in existence. As for domestic support, a set of rules and commitments were established to impose quantitative constraints on particular types of support (WTO, Oct. 2002).

In Canada, this agreement resulted in further liberalization of agriculture policy (with a growing emphasis on trade exports) and a reduction in spending on farm subsidies and income support. As will be discussed below, the entrenchment of liberal ideology within the Canadian government along with the deepening alliance with the corporate elite has further limited the number of effective and legitimate means for movement organizations such as the NFU to be heard. This has facilitated a growth in a more radical discourse within the organization and a framing process that is less about influence and more about the necessity for fundamental change.

When the AoA entered into effect in 1993, it was agreed that work would continue towards refining the agreement. The WTO Committee on Agriculture was to have reached some semblance of agreement by March 31st of 2003 over agriculture trade reforms. However, growing tension among the participants over key issues, particularly domestic subsidies in the US and EU caused the deadline to pass without an agreement. Both Europe and Japan are resolutely opposed to substantially greater cuts to both tariffs and export subsidies, both of which have been proposed by the US negotiators¹⁷.

¹⁷In response to American criticism that they could not see the bigger picture 'over the hedgerows, members of the EU negotiating team have in turn accused the United States of hypocritical rhetoric since Bush's administration itself extended heavy subsidies to its farmers and steel makers through a series of controversial laws last year including a \$248.6 billion US farm bill in May, 2002 (Grundgings and Kitano, 2003).

Of particular interest to Canadian farmers is the agriculture committee's attack on the CWB as a state-run monopoly. While the CWB is allowed under GATT Article XVII as a State Trading Enterprise so long as it is not provided special considerations and operates as a commercial body. The outcome of the current WTO talks may alter this exemption, however, and create the necessary circumstances for the Board's extinction. According to the NFU and the Canadian government, the attack on the CWB (largely by the United States) at these talks is just a smokescreen by other nations to redirect criticism away from the illegal subsidies which they have in place domestically (Canada [DFAIT], Mar. 2003).

The negotiations are heavily divided over the list of subsidies that currently meet the criteria for 'green box' status. Among the subsidies that are being debated are some that have a direct impact on Canadian farmers, since they make up the bulk of support offered by the Canadian government. According to the WTO, the main subsidies in questions are the use of direct payments to producers (including decoupled income support) and government financial support for income insurance and income safety-net programs. While some nations (the US and the Cairns Group) have taken the stance that such subsidies are trade distorting, other countries (the EU and Japan) take the opposite view, arguing that the current criteria are not only adequate, but should perhaps be more flexible in the face of non-trade concerns such as environmental protection and animal welfare (WTO, Oct. 2002).

It is important to note that Canada is still taking a stance that allows for the continued existence of such institutions as the CWB, though the negotiating team has met

with substantial opposition for the policy. The growing tension within the AoA clearly illustrates the sensitive nature of agriculture and the difficulty of fitting it successfully into the liberalized world economy. The disputes also provide international opportunity structures to organizations, who by taking advantage of the tensions and cracks within the elite alliances can successfully promote their own alternatives. It is here as well that TSMOs become vitally important, as they are capable of taking advantage of opportunity structures in Europe that may not exist in Canada or the United States.

The outcome of the AoA in the WTO has not been entirely successful in achieving its aims. The AoA failed to take into account vital aspects of international agriculture, it was wrong in its predictions about who would most benefit from increased exports, how farmers would respond to the changes in support programs, and it failed to predict the direction world prices in agriculture would take (this is still a disputed issue, as there seems to be a continued disbelief among trading members that a 'free market' will not level out prices between demand and supply) (Murphy 2002).

The AoA has been truly successful at only one thing, and even here has struggled. That success lies in the challenges it has mounted on the behalf of agribusinesses and states against supply management systems (the recently successful challenge of Canada's milk board for exports through the WTO by New Zealand, is a primary example). This is a particularly destructive policy in Canada, where supply management agencies were created throughout the 20th Century in order to protect farmers from the overwhelming power of the corporate food processors. Many of the challenges have come from corporations such as Cargill, which has repeatedly backed and instigated attacks on the

CWB in the past decades (McMichael, 2000).

The FTA, the NAFTA, and the FTAA

The WTO is not the only trade body to which Canada is a member; the nation is also a signatory to numerous regional trade agreements. The largest and perhaps most encompassing is the NAFTA, which was built upon its predecessor, the FTA. Canada is even now deepening its commitment to liberal economic free trade by negotiating the FTAA, a far broader trade agreement that seeks to extend the framework of the NAFTA throughout the hemisphere. These agreements are all part of the new realities of the disembedded system, and fundamentally affect the agricultural sector in Canada as agriculture is no longer a protected part of both economic and social policy.

The FTA, the NAFTA, and the proposed FTAA place agriculture in the same framework as the manufacturing sector. Many opponents of agricultural free trade are quick to make a definitive distinction between sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture. As members of the NFU will argue in the next chapter; food supplies the necessities of life, and should not be left up to the profit driven ambition of the market or TNCs, and this is what free trade agreements are doing.

The NAFTA provisions on agriculture between Canada and the United States are a continuation of the previous FTA. The FTA chapter on agriculture (see appendix 3.1) outlines several initiatives to liberalize the agricultural sector. Article 701 of the Agreement outlines the main restrictions and changes to the system of trade. The most important is the prohibition of export subsidies on all bilateral trade in agriculture. Further, Articles 401 and 702 bind the signatories to eliminating all tariffs over a ten year

period (the deadline was successfully met in January of 1998 with the exception of a limited number of agricultural products). As well, Article 705 specifies the elimination of Canadian import licenses for wheat, barley, and oats when American support levels became equal to Canadian, which has yet to happen. Finally, the FTA places all agricultural trade issues not dealt with specifically in the FTA under the jurisdiction of the GATT, and now WTO (Canada [AAFC], Jan. 20, 2003a).

The elimination of the quotas and tariffs through the FTA has fundamentally weakened the supply management system, as it was these same tariffs that upheld the marketing board systems. Thus, as sectors with supply management began to weaken, and the FTA limited possible reactions by the federal government, new opportunity structures became available, and organizations such as the NFU began to mobilize and frame issues in a more radical manner.

The new opportunity structures which arose out of the new system of free trade, specifically the FTA, led to the creation of an organization called the Action Canada Network (ACN). As will be discussed in the next chapter, the ACN provided vital organization, information and monetary resources that smaller member organizations such as the NFU needed in order to take advantage of the new opportunities for collective action. The ACN¹⁸ was created in 1987 to fight the FTA. Following the economic crisis of the late 1970's and early 1980's a Royal Commission on the Economic Union and

¹⁸ Originally it was called the Pro-Canada Network, but was renamed the Action Canada Network to be more inclusive of Québec activist groups (Bleyer 1997). The Network consisted of many social groups including labour, church, Aboriginal, women's, seniors, youth, anti-poverty and farmer groups (Ayres 1997).

Development Prospects for Canada was appointed in 1982. When the Commission finally filed its report in 1985, the Conservatives had been elected and were implementing their pro-business agenda of deregulation, privatization and spending cuts, which neatly fit with the commission's recommendations of increasing the role of the market and reducing government involvement. This change in policy and state action was a watershed in Canadian history, and witnessed the creation of many movements and organizations through the opportunity structures which this upheaval created.

The NAFTA chapter on Agriculture continues the agreement formed under the FTA between the United States and Canada. In regards to Mexico, meanwhile, the agreement is in fact made up of two arrangements: one between Mexico and the US, and one between Mexico and Canada. The agreement between Canada and Mexico contains a schedule for eliminating tariffs, which culminated in January 2003 with the full elimination of agricultural tariff barriers between the two nations (excepting dairy, poultry and eggs, and sugar) (Canada [AAFC], Jan. 20, 2003b). These trade rules established in the FTA and the NAFTA are now being extended into South America and the Caribbean through the FTAA negotiations .

The proposed FTAA aims to enhance both the NAFTA's and the WTO's AoA in the next round of negotiations. The stated aims of the FTAA Negotiating Group on Agriculture are: to eliminate agricultural export subsidies affecting trade in the hemisphere; bring trade distorting practices for agricultural products under greater discipline; and ensure that 'sanitary and phytosanitary measures' are not used as disguised restriction to trade (FTAA, 2003). The proposed AoA of the FTAA will act to set rules

and restrictions not only on international agricultural trade policy, but also domestic policies that might affect the import or export of farm products and inputs, see appendix 3.2 (FTAA, Nov. 2002a). This type of agreement will affect all levels of small-scale farming, even the level of support governments may provide for farmers, and the ability to maintain emergency food stocks, set food rules and ensure a secure food supply (Barlow, 2000). This, once again, is creating opportunity structures for a free trade debate, and most importantly, has broadened the arena from regional to international, which has provided new possibilities for framing and mobilization by organizations such as the NFU. To better understand the perspective and discourse of the NFU as it mobilizes against the free trade system it is important to understand the domestic circumstances the organization is facing. The Canadian government's facilitation of the changes in agricultural trade, and the limitations discussed above that these agreements impose on government policy, have altered the domestic opportunity structures and created new grievances within the farming community.

Canadian Agricultural Policy

Agricultural policy in Canada has undergone some serious reforms in the past few decades. In the past, the role of the government in agriculture was to ensure that farmers enjoyed a fair and stable income. The international system endorsed these policies until the late 1970s as an extension of the widely accepted principle of embedded liberalism. According to Grace Skogstad (1987), this began to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the influence of agricultural interests, especially western Canadian agriculture, was significantly reduced. Problems such as Quebec separatism, demands by the

provinces for more power and control, and a deepening economic recession pushed aside the issues in domestic agriculture.

As government priorities shifted from agriculture (small as it was) to constitutional reform and the failing industrial economy, the burgeoning deficit further dried up support funds that might have found their way to farms, or further subsidised railway transportation costs. Farmers were also an increasingly smaller number of the general population, and this affected their ability to apply pressure electorally or through formal institutions as they once had. This switch in domestic policy not only contributed to the weakening of the farm support system that once ensured farmers received a fair wage for their labour but also created new arenas for activism and opportunity structures. The farm crisis and growing lack of legitimate recourse radicalized the framing process for many farm groups, including the NFU.

Since the 1980s the Canadian government's move toward liberal trade agreements has led to an emphasis in agriculture policy on free markets and the deregulation of support programs (Boyens, 2001). Further, not only has international trade in agriculture become more important, but the actions of AAFC are now more than ever constrained by the international trade regimes to which the government has bound itself. The primary concern of agricultural policy in Canada has become economic viability and global competitiveness. At first glance, this policy has been an extraordinary success. Over the past 25 years, Canada's agriculture exports have increased substantially, from \$4 billion in 1975 to over \$25 billion in 2001. However, throughout this surge in exports farmers' incomes have consistently continued to fall since the 1980s (see appendix 3.3). Added to

the deepening income crisis is the decreasing levels of government support and the subsequent loss of almost 50,000 farms between 1988 and 2002 (see appendix 3.4).

Agriculture in Canada is now dominated by trade concerns, and often export considerations set the policy for domestic agriculture. In the period between January and December 2001, agri-food exports equalled \$26.64 billion, contributing to a \$7.41 billion trade surplus in the agricultural sector (Gervais, Feb. 2002). This surplus is the product of a very successful policy that began in 1993 when provincial and federal agricultural ministers joined together and set a target of \$20 billion in agri-food exports to be reached by 2000. That goal was reached far ahead of schedule in 1997, so in 1998 the ministers set a new goal of \$40 billion in exports by 2005, and in so doing aimed to capture 4% of the total global agricultural trade market (Boyens, 2001). It is entirely possible that this goal will also be met, though exports slowed in 2002 down 1.47% between January and August from the same period in 2001 (Gervais, Feb. 2003a).

The obsession that the current government has with export volumes creates a situation where the level of imports is not as important. When taken into account, imports set back the 'extraordinary' export levels by a substantial amount which, understood in this manner, remained relatively static until 2001. The agri-food trade balance (import level subtracted from export level) in 2001 was \$7.41 billion, an increase of almost 25% from the year before (Gervais, Feb. 2002). However, in 2002 the trade balance had fallen sharply due to a decrease in exports but a continuing rise of imports to \$3.28 billion, a drop of almost 28% from the year previous (Gervais, Feb. 2003b). The central issue is that while exports have increased, as it is shown in Appendix 3.5, the

success of this increase is lessened considerably when it is noted that Canadian domestic markets are now turning to the more volatile international markets for suppliers¹⁹(Boyens, 2001).

While Canadian agriculture policy has indeed been radically liberalized since the 1980s, circumstances still prevent a full scale reform of the sector. Much like the problems that are arising within the agriculture negotiations at the WTO, the residual understanding of the importance of food production makes it difficult for any government to allow the sector to free fall in an unrestricted global economy. So the Canadian government is left with a mixed bag of programs and initiatives that often promote very different messages about where agriculture is headed in Canada. From one direction the government is opting for deregulating much of the agricultural system by eliminating such supports as the Crow Benefit in 1995.²⁰ Indeed, as appendix 3.6 shows, at the height of this farm crisis support by the federal government has levelled off and not risen to meet the needs of many farmers. Adjusted for inflation, government spending is at its sixth lowest in 18 years, and, as will be discussed below, the new APF provides no plans for increased spending over the next few years (Wells Speech, 2003). The income crisis

¹⁹This leads to the issue of food security, and AAFC's seeming willingness to sacrifice domestic security for the possibility of greater access to export markets. Certainly this is a policy that neither the United States nor the European Union is about to follow any time soon, which of course in turn limits Canada's export markets.

²⁰A partial list of the major federal government spending cuts include: The Crow Benefit, which acted to partially cover grain transportation costs, it was terminated in 1995; Special Canadian Grain Program, was created to protect farmers from the low prices that resulted in the US/EU trade war, it was terminated in 1988; Tripartite Stabilization, stabilized the prices of hogs 2002).

has radicalized many farmers especially as the changing nature of state response to falling incomes and growing bankruptcies has become more industry centred, influenced by the strengthening of the neo-liberal ideology.

From another direction however, comes the continued (though weakened) support for the supply management system in the form of the CWB, Egg, Chicken, Turkey and Milk Marketing Boards. This policy of support is mainly due to the defensible nature of the marketing boards, which act not as subsidies but as income stabilization, while at the same time helping to increase exports. Further, the boards are immensely popular with farmers (less than 17% of farmers in the west are opposed to the CWB) and provide vital public relations when other forms of support are being dismantled (Boyens, 2001). The dual personality of government policy has meant that while the NFU uses a radical framing process to unite the diverse farmers across Canada, it is still able to make use of state institutions to push for change (though with decreasing effectiveness).

Farm Safety Nets in Canada

In order to remain compliant with international and regional trade rules, Canada has based the new programs that provide support on short-term aid. The WTO trumpets this type of support in its AoA, arguing that assistance should not be of a long term character but instead work to provide emergency aid at the time of crisis and then step back once the producers have regained their feet. The three main pillars of Canada's farm safety net are the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA), Crop Insurance (CI), and a disaster relief program, Canada Farm Income Program (CFIP).

NISA works as a voluntary program that is designed to help farmers produce

income stability over the long term. It was developed and is administered jointly between the federal government and participating provinces and works by providing 'producers' the opportunity to put money in a NISA account, to which the government makes matching contributions. Thus, during the 'good years,' NISA accounts are meant to grow and provide a buffer for farmers during lower income years, during which they can make withdrawals from the funds that have been previously set aside (Canada [AAFC], Jan. 24, 2003).

In theory, NISA provides an invaluable buffer for the lean years that are a fact of farming. However, two fatal flaws exist within this program. During periods when the 'lean years' begin to stretch out, funds in these accounts quickly dry up. Indeed by the end of 2000 the average NISA account held only about \$21,516 (Boyens, 2001).

Another flaw in the NISA program is the required excess capital needed in order to build up the NISA account. Even in the 'good' years small family farms do not make profits of a margin that might allow for large deposits into such an account (according to Statistics Canada, in 2000 at least half of all farmers in Canada were making Gross Receipts of less than \$50,000). While it is true that any amount helps, what this then leads to is that those with large NISA accounts are often those who need financial support the least. According to the NFU, in 2001 the top 2% of NISA account holders were in possession of over 20% of the NISA funds. This means that just 2,281 farmers in Canada controlled over \$650 million with average account balances of \$285,719. On the other side of the fence, half of NISA participants carry account balances well below \$8,000.

The Crop Insurance (CI) program is delivered by the ten provinces that have

entered into a 'cost sharing agreement' with the federal government under the Farm Income Protection Act (FIPA). This partnership extends to the farmer, who pays a premium each year in order to ensure that the CI programs in their respective province remain self-sustaining. CI is a 'cost-shared' program that works to stabilize a farmer's income by lessening the impact of crop losses caused by *natural* hazards such as droughts, floods, and insects. According to AAFC, the 'producer' benefits through a reduction in the risk that is involved in farming, which CI shares between the farmer, provinces, and federal government (Canada [AAFC], July 2002b).

While CI does provide some stability in the event of natural disasters, it fails to provide any support for losses that are due to low prices and its payments are based on world prices, which does not cover costs of production for many farmers even in the good years. CI also fails to acknowledge different systems of farming. Certified organic farmers receive payouts based on the world price of conventionally grown commodities, ignoring the often higher prices of organic produce. Finally, a similar problem arises with CI as with NISA, in that over a string of bad years a farm's average yield can become so low that the payouts CI can dispense are so minimal they provide very little support (NFU, Sept. 2001).

The Canadian Farm Income Program (CFIP) replaced the disaster relief program AIDA in 2000 and covers up until and including the 2002 tax year. Generally these programs are of short duration (often two or three years) and are meant to be an infusion of capital over the period of the crisis/disaster. The objective of CFIP is to provide a short-term income support to those farmers who are eligible and, due to circumstances

beyond their control face a dramatic decline in on-farm income in relation to previous years. The program provides further support to NISA and CI, and of course is compatible with the criteria of the AoA and NAFTA.

The process of gaining support through CFIP can be complicated. The level of support is determined on a program margin basis²¹, which is used to measure the level of income decline of the applicant. When the claim year margin (the program margin for that year) falls at least 70% below the historical average of the program margin (average income in prior years of farming), then coverage under CFIP may be provided (Canada, [AAFC] 2001).

The Canadian government provides a substantial amount of money through these three support programs. However, the maldistribution of funds, as well as the growing ad hoc nature of the programs, has created opportunities for the NFU to unite farmers across the country over the commonly held frustration and anger of the perceived abandonment of family farms by the government in favour of large industrial farms and agribusiness. The problem with Canada's safety net programs such as NISA and CFIP is not under-funding, but one of poor planning and focus.

Even if AIDA/CFIP, NISA, and CI paid out 25% or 50% more money, because they are un-targeted, uncapped, and ill-designed programs, they would result in the same negative outcomes. ... evidence for this assertion comes from the US, where more lucrative (but similarly un-targeted) farm programs are causing a similar expulsion of farmers and a corporate takeover of agriculture (NFU, Sept. 2001: 15).

²¹“A program margin represents the money that is available to a producer in a tax year after they have paid the cash operating costs on the farm. This is calculated as the difference between total allowable income and total allowable expenses (as defined by CFIP) in a tax year”(Canada [AAFC], 2001)

In March 2003 the federal government introduced a new agriculture and farm policy called the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)²² which will replace and incorporate NISA, CFIP, and CI. In many ways, the APF comes closer to creating an actual policy on agriculture than there has been since the 1970s. The framework is composed of five main elements: food safety and food quality, the environment, science and innovation, renewal, and business risk management (BRM)²³. While it is encouraging that there is a policy that looks at all of these issues, it still rests heavily on the importance of exports and it is clearly stated that all the components are to be built upon the base of BRM.

AAFC describes the APF as a way in which to undertake a set of comprehensive initiatives across Canada in order to adapt and exploit today's market realities. According to AAFC's liberal economic discourse this means that "advances in technology and productivity improvements have led to a sustained, long-term decline in most commodity prices. ... increased international competition will continue to push prices down, regardless of the level of government support"(Canada [AAFC], April 2002: 2).

The most important part of the new APF is the move from safety nets to a form of

²²The APF is facing increasing criticism from all farm groups as well as a number of provinces. Most recently Ontario has threatened to not sign on, and just create its own farm policy provincially.

²³BRM is meant to replace the subsidies that have been lost over the past two decades. According to AAFC, BRM will provide funding (up to \$1.1 billion a year for five years) to aid farmers in becoming more profitable. Aid is now swiftly becoming tied not to need, but to performance, and while to the market ideology that seems more than logical, it simply does not work in the family farm system.

risk management. In so doing, AAFC programs will place greater emphasis on growth and the improvement of income in the sector. The APF will encourage farmers to manage the risk of farming better and to “improve the viability of their farm through change and innovation” (Canada [AAFC], April 2002: 4). This new approach to farm support draws on current programs such as NISA, CFIP, and CI. AAFC claims to have also learned from the weaknesses of the current programming and believes that BRM will work to incorporate long term planning tools and create incentives to adopt business strategies from the private sector, all of which will help farmers strengthen their operations²⁴. According to AAFC, BRM is critical for the success of the APF. Through it food safety and better environmental practises will grow, while providing for the expansion of farms through applications of new technologies and renewal.

As in the past, the creation of a ‘new’ agriculture policy, especially one that claims to define the government’s intent, has created new opportunity structures for the NFU. It has not only increased discourse among farmers over the causes of the farm crisis and possible solutions, but has also created cracks among the different levels of government over where agriculture policy should go. This in turn is allowing the NFU to take advantage of the federal government’s inability to get all the provincial governments in line with the new policy. Divisions among the elites can not only provide a sense of optimism that change is possible, but also can provide legitimacy to the criticism made by the NFU if it is repeated by a legitimate institution (in this case for example the Ontario

²⁴It is interesting to note, that the main weakness that many farmers complain of in the farm support programs (that the money is not targeted to those who most need it) is not mentioned in the government policy statement.

provincial government).

The APF appears to be a policy blinded by the need to increase the size of Canada's export markets, while using the rhetoric of sustainability and safety as its *raison d'être*. Added to this is the further entrenchment of liberal economic values in the support system through the new BRM. All of the above issues are helping to mobilize farmers against the new support program. As well, the NFU has the opportunity to frame the income crisis in a radical manner that demand as a solution a fundamental restructuring of the entire agriculture system, instead of a reorganization of funds and a new set of terminology, which according to the NFU is all the APF really has to offer.

The changing form of support in Canada is a contributing factor to the growing crisis in farming. Using the perception by many small farmers that the government is failing to adequately support family farms and the weakness and changing nature of the three main support structures, the NFU is creating a framing process and using mobilizing structures that are linking farmers across the country.

Conclusion

The globalization of the agriculture sector has led to a structural crisis within the international family/peasant farming sector. In Canada, this crisis has been facilitated by the growth of the TNCs in the sector and their monopolistic control of the inputs farmers need to farm, as well as the purchasing of the products which the farmers' produce. The disembedding of the liberal compromise that was best articulated through the welfare state has fundamentally altered the status of agriculture and food production, domestically and also globally. All of these structural changes brought about by free trade,

globalization, and the shifting of power to TNCs has not only created political opportunity structures for the NFU to articulate its position, but has also facilitated a growing radical discourse as the state system becomes less responsive to movement organizations such as the NFU due to a fundamental ideological shift towards neo-liberalism.

Free trade has brought about an increase in agricultural trade of 5.5 percent in just over a decade. Over that same period farm income has dropped by 25 percent, a trend that shows no signs of stopping (See appendix 3.4) (NFU, August 2002). Two different explanations can be given for the drop in farm incomes. Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) argue that world markets are glutted due to agricultural subsidies, which areas such as the EU and United States still have in place (Canada [AAFC], Oct. 2002). However, there is an absence of any sort of relationship between subsidy levels and production (areas with subsidies produce no more than areas without) and no evidence to support the argument that the world market is being over supplied with products such as wheat.

The second explanation points to the ever greater domination of the agricultural sector by the massive agribusiness corporations and a market created maldistribution of income and wealth. In a system dominated by billion dollar corporations who have free trade agreements protecting their interests, farmers have little power to influence the cost of farm inputs or the prices of the produce which they sell (Rees, 2000).

The growing focus, through the WTO and the NAFTA, on agricultural exports as opposed to domestic production has created a fundamental shift in how nations can

respond to demands made by movement organizations such as the NFU. The has in turn created a new set of political opportunity structures from which the NFU can draw both mobilizing structures and framing processes. The disembedding of the liberal compromise and the broadening of liberalization into agriculture has not only curtailed the ways in which the Canadian government can react to the farm crisis, but has also led to the growing transnational perspective of the NFU, as well as its membership with the TSMO Vía Campesina.

Canada, among other nations, has removed itself from the role of protector for areas of the economy such as agriculture, once considered vulnerable and in need of tariff and non-tariff barriers. This has had a significant effect on the sector, and also on the mobilization structures and framing processes of the NFU. The increasing global liberalization of agriculture has increased and broadened the role of the NFU as a social movement organization. The organization has not only radicalised its tactics, but has also broadened its framing processes to successfully incorporate regional and international issues.

The next chapter deals specifically with the NFU as a social movement organization, looking at its mobilization, tactics, and goals in the current system of agriculture in Canada. As has been outlined previously, the NFU comes from a long history of farm organizations and movements, some more radical than others. However, the political opportunity structures that have been created since the 1980s with the spread of globalization and the disembedding of the liberal compromise have taken the NFU in a new direction. Increasing free trade, the reduction of domestic policy control over

agriculture, and growing international links have all contributed to the growing radical discourse of the NFU. In this context the organization is mobilizing against the industrial agriculture system on behalf of small sustainable farm systems the world over. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Sowing the Seeds of Resistance: The NFU's fight for Agriculture

The changes in the Canadian system of agriculture have been discussed in depth in the previous chapters. The discussion that follows is one that looks closely at the role one farm organization has taken within the farm sector in Canada. The NFU is a fascinating case study of how characteristics of the political system often influence the growth of less institutionalized political and collective action. This organization is riding a wave of growing resistance among many farmers to the changing nature of the political system and the growth of an industrial form of agriculture that is putting many out of business.

The NFU represents thousands of family farms across Canada. It believes that the problems farmers are facing today are the same faced by farmers throughout the world. According to the NFU, all farmers, no matter what they produce, must join together and work to advance effective solutions to the crisis that is now a structural part of the industrial agriculture system.

In this chapter, I argue that the radicalization of NFU discourse can be understood as a result of shifting political opportunity structures as well as the growth of new opportunities for mobilization internationally. Movement organizations most often arise during times of change in the institutional roles, political alignments, and alliance structures of the dominant groups. While the NFU existed prior to the 1980s, the emergence of free trade as a dominant policy item of the Conservative government significantly expanded the structures of political opportunity for anti-free trade

organizations. Coupled with this, since the late 1970s, farmers were also facing a severe income and debt crisis caused by the dramatic, and simultaneous, drop in grain prices and rise in oil costs. This was only exacerbated by the Conservative government's lack of interest at the time in the farm sector and its demands. All of these circumstances came together and helped to shift the NFU toward a more radical critique of the political system, independent of the state instructions, which allowed the organization to take advantage of the rising political opportunity structures.

This study will apply the four main dimensions of institutional politics that, according to Doug McAdam (1998), shape collective action. These include: the open or closed nature of the political system; the stability of elite alignments; the presence of elite allies; and the state's capacity for repression. As well, the three crucial factors of mobilization: the structure of political opportunities; preexisting organizations and resources; and a sentiment of solidarity, will also be applied to illuminate the changing characteristics of the NFU. Specifically, this chapter will discuss how the shifting domestic role of the state in agriculture and the mainstream farm organizations has created opportunities for greater mobilization by the NFU. Further to this, there are several specific opportunities that have caused the NFU to take up a more radical anti-free trade stance in the past decades.

A crucial aspect of mobilization is the moment when possible activists perceive the changing political, organizational, and resource conditions as favourable for successful collective action and protest. In the 1980s, the free trade stance of the Conservative government, the recession, and income crisis among farmers, linked with

the support provided by the ACN (discussed below) provided the impetus for farmers to mobilize and become active in the anti-free trade debate. Free trade was truly the starting point for much of the critique offered by the NFU, and also facilitated a shift by the organization to a more transnational frame. This has in turn exposed the NFU and its members to more radical discourses offered by other movements. As well, the disembedding of the liberal compromise made it necessary for the NFU to find new ways to assert its demands for change. By pushing the group outside the boundaries of legitimate institutions, the shifting nature of state action and its growing allegiances with global corporate elites facilitated increasingly radical demands for fundamental changes to the structures of the neo-liberal economic system by the organization.

The framing processes that the NFU employs are strongly rooted to the culture and history of agrarian resistance in Canada. As discussed in a previous chapter, the main framing process that these historical farm organizations utilized was radical populism. This framework created common grievances surrounding the lack of power that the 'common people' held in Canada and the need to reform the capitalist system to better provide for individuals such as farmers. The influence of the many populist farm organizations in Canada's past can be seen not only in the direct membership structure of the Union, but also in its continual attack on the political system for being unresponsive to the general populace (particularly farmers) while forming policy that is in the direct interests of TNCs. The NFU is a culmination of over 100 years of protest and articulation of a better world by farmers. Past agrarian critiques of the capitalist system are echoed today in the NFU's condemnation of neo-liberal globalization.

Past farm organizations have aided in creating the Canadian welfare state and succeeded in creating protections for farmers from the vagaries of the capitalist system. Embedded liberalism reflected many of the issues raised by agrarian agitation in its quest for stabilization and fair markets. Since the 1980s this system has been dismantled. However, for a time it provided a protective barrier between farmers, labourers, and all citizens, and the stark competition of unfettered capitalism. The loss of the protection afforded by the liberal compromise has facilitated the growth of new opportunity structures, not only domestically but also regionally and internationally. Further, the new system has also pushed organizations like the NFU out of the legitimate state structures, and by doing so has helped to create a more radical discourse.

The following discussion will consider how, and why, the growing liberalization, free trade, and the control by TNCs over the farm sector has led the NFU to reject the liberal free market system that has replaced embedded liberalism. The organization's growing focus on wider international issues, such as food sovereignty, over the more traditional issues of domestic protection, will also be investigated. This chapter will also look at the NFU's self assigned mandate and how it is fitting into that niche among farmers. As well, a brief discussion on what the organization considers to be the alternative will be discussed. By understanding how the changing political structures and conditions create opportunities for the growth of social movement organizations, the motivations, policies, and recent actions of the NFU can be better explained.

The NFU considers itself not just an organization, but also a movement. Its statement of purpose recognizes this role and the direction in which the movement needs

to travel:

Our movement is based on a foundation of understanding. It is an understanding that highlights the positive concepts and needs that will unite us as farmers; for understanding follows learning, and we are learning that as farmers we hold a common stake in the welfare of one another and our nation. We are learning that the pursuit of only individual self-interest leads inevitably to self-destruction. We are learning that the society in which we live and toil is exploitive in nature and the power of abundance we possess is widely subjected to economic exploitation to our disadvantage (NFU, Nov. 2001: A-1).

The National Farmers Union is working to create an alternative to the neo-liberal discourse expressed through globalization and free trade. Their policies and actions reflect this objective, from their stance on supply management systems, to their membership in the international peasant and small farmer movement, Vía Campesina.

The NFU - A Brief Introduction

The history of farm activism in Canada, as described in an earlier chapter, carried a strong anti-combine and ‘anti-old party’ tradition. This belief that farmers were under attack by the ‘big interests’ is still reflected in the framing process of the NFU. While the NFU focuses on various issues which affect family farms in Canada, the basis for much of its critique is the power of the agribusiness sector. The common ‘enemy’ which this set of elites provides is invaluable to the mobilization of farm activists, and also provides many opportunities to link with other civil society organizations, as corporations such as Cargill and Monsanto control more than just farm production²⁵.

²⁵Companies such as Cargill, ConAgra, and Monsanto have extraordinarily diverse interests and control such a large portion of the market, that small producers can not hope to compete (see appendix 4.1). With the increased concentration of this sector and the increased links between corporations producing inputs, buying outputs, and processing for sale to consumers, opportunities have arisen to frame resistance to the policies and actions of TNCs in a broad manner that crosses civil society.

The main difference between the preceding farmer movements and the NFU is that agribusinesses have now moved onto an international scene, while decreasing in number. This in turn has shifted some of the focus of the NFU toward an international critique of the economic system. Further, with the extension internationally of the scope of agribusiness, the links between elite groups has also been extended and deepened from what it was in the past. This shifting and growth in elite alliances in turn affects the opportunity structures, possibilities for mobilization, and the scope of grievances that organizations like the NFU can use to create solidarity. The issues around which the NFU frames its actions echo what many past farm organizations articulated. The main grievance that mobilizes farm activists is the increasing monopoly in both the input and processing sectors. As well, these farmers recognise the danger of the increasing exodus from rural communities, and the spread of an urban culture far removed from food production.

The NFU was founded in 1969 and chartered by an Act of Parliament in 1970. The organization was created through the merger of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union (SFU), the Ontario Farmers Union (OFU), the Farmers Union of BC (FUBC), and the Farmers Union of Alberta (FUA). Previously, these unions existed autonomously in their respective provinces. The act of drawing together into a national organization was facilitated by the growing awareness that, segmented provincially as well as by production types, farmers were being easily ignored in Ottawa. The nature of the state at the time demanded a unified voice in order to be heard. The regional organizations that formed the NFU faced a growing lack of political opportunity structures within the

Canadian federal system that might have allowed such regional and small farm organizations to gain the ear of the policy makers through state institutions.

Even in the early 1970s most of the institutional opportunities for action existed because three of the Western provinces had pro-active NDP governments who worked with farmers and the federal government to ensure that agricultural issues were heard in Ottawa. Even this access became limited in the later 1970s, with the growing alienation of the west from Ottawa (Gleave, 1991). This situation has only been exacerbated in the 1990s with the rise of the Reform/Canadian Alliance²⁶ and the relative demise of the Progressive Conservatives and NDP, all of whom, especially the first two, are the main recipients of the farm vote in federal elections. This increasing lack of representation and recourse through legitimate channels is contributing to the growing radical discourse of numerous farmers, many of whom are represented by the NFU.

Up until the 1960s, the NFU was known as the Interprovincial Farm Union Council (IFUC). The member unions of the IFUC remained fairly non-political, as many of their members felt they were represented adequately by the CCF, and later the NDP, while others rejected the policies of the CCF and NDP, but wished to be part of a direct-membership farm organizations.

In 1956 a meeting of the provincial boards of directors of the farm unions was held in Saskatoon. The main issue brought to the table that year, was the relationship

²⁶The Canadian Alliance position on agriculture is a mixture of protectionism and free market ideology. The party supports a 'voluntary CWB' which would allow farmers the option of selling grain on their own. However, they also argue that they would 'protect the viable supply management systems' and put an end of the 'ad hoc' subsidy system which the Liberal government is currently using.

between the IFUC and the CFA. Both organizations laid claim to being the representatives of farm opinion across the country. The CFA's roots were in the CCA, created in 1935; it was comprised of provincial member organizations all of whom had a federated structure. The IFUC's direct membership roots meanwhile, went as far back as the TGGA in Saskatchewan, and in other provinces it was firmly based around the time of settlement. Both the CFA and IFUC made submissions to the federal government, and both were active in developing policy on behalf of their members. It was at the meeting in 1956 that the directors made a far-reaching decision in respect to this overlap in representation, but it was a decision that would not come into full effect until 1969 (Gleave, 1991).

The delegates passed a motion calling for the amalgamation of the IFUC and the CFA into one direct membership national farm organization. This proposal was to be taken back by the delegates to their respective provincial organizations for a vote, after which, if a majority were in favour, the IFUC would begin negotiations with the CFA. However, should the CFA turn down the proposed amalgamation, then the IFUC directors proposed that a committee be formed to draft a constitution for a National Farmers' Union.

It was not until 1963 that the IFUC (now renamed the NFU) met with the CFA to discuss the structure of farm organizations in Canada. While little had come from the resolution in 1956 there was still continued pressure for regional unity among farm organizations. The greatest pressure arose from within the member organizations as the SFU and FUA were members of both the NFU and CFA. In 1962 the CFA authorized its

directors to work along with the NFU to study the possibility of providing a solution to the unity issue. The two organizations met in 1962 and 1963 without reaching a consensus.

The proposal which the NFU brought to the table in 1962 was to restructure the national and provincial organizations so as to lead to the dominance of direct membership organizations in the decision making process. The CFA (with its federated structure), proposed that the emphasis of unity should be placed on policies and educational programs of farm organizations and agricultural policy and not direct membership. Once it proved impossible to reach accommodation with the CFA, the alternative was to change the structure of the Union into a unified national organization, which took place in 1969 (Gleave, 1991).

The founding convention in Winnipeg in 1969 was attended by over 2000 people, all of whom hoped that the formation of the NFU was a step towards better representation of the small and medium farmers across the nation. Since its inception, the NFU has been considered the 'left' farm organization in Canada, often labelled as such by groups like the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, which is one of many firmly situated on the agribusiness', and 'bigger is better' side of the farm gate.

In the early 1980s, the disembedding of the liberal compromise caused a decline in the NFU's strength in membership and finances to the point where its effectiveness as a truly meaningful force as a farm organization became questionable. A drastic drop in grain prices and a heavy farm debt load coincided with the decline in the power and influence of the NFU. This is a situation that the NFU continues to battle back against

today, particularly in Ontario. It is doing so by taking advantage of opportunities and mobilizing structures being created through the globalization of the farm sector (as will be discussed below).

The organization remained active throughout the 1970s and 1980s despite the decline in membership and loss of its role in policy making (See Appendix 4.2). It adopted agricultural issues such as fighting for orderly marketing systems, protesting against import dumping, and denouncing the government policies in the 1970s that proposed a two-third reduction of family farms in Canada (proposed in a 1970 Task Force Report on Agriculture). The organization also took part in, and organized, tractor blockades over issues such as marketing boards, tax breaks for farm fuel, low interest loans and the continued encroachment of corporations into the farming sector. The protests and agitation continued throughout the 1970s, meeting with varying degrees success.

The first major battle of the 1980s was over the survival of the Crow Rate (terminated in 1984, it was a subsidy given to farmers to help ease the high costs of shipping grain). The failure to protect the Crow Rate and its abolition and replacement by the Crow Benefit (which was terminated entirely in 1995) was a severe blow to the NFU, and witnessed a beginning of a reduction in influence of the organization within the government.

It was also in the 1980s, however, that new political opportunity structures began to arise, starting with the election of the Progressive Conservatives as the governing party. Free trade quickly emerged as a major part of the government's agenda. It was

during this time that the structures of political opportunity for anti-free trade organizations (as the NFU quickly became) expanded. As the FTA negotiations became more serious, the arenas for discussion, criticism, and protest against the impending deal multiplied (Ayres, 1998).

Free trade encouraged the development of protest and collective action through speeches, debates, meetings and committees that created a dialogue, which provided in turn, a plethora of mobilization points which activists used to frame their critique of free trade and the Mulroney agenda (Ayres, 1998). For the NFU, the disruptive political conditions stimulating the development of movement organizations during this period were intensified by an income crisis caused by a drop in commodity prices, and an increase in farm debt financed by ever increasing interest rates. Political upheavals and economic crisis like those experienced by Canadian farmers in the 1980s increases the momentum of movement organizations by granting more leverage to the aggrieved groups with which to press their claims. As such, the NFU was able to gain greater opportunities for collective action and protest through the destabilising and changing political and economic conditions in Canada.

The battle against the FTA was in many ways the beginning of a new chapter for the NFU. By working with the Action Canada Network (ACN), new links were forged with other civil society organizations seeking goals that were not primarily focussed on protectionism. As will be discussed below, the strength of the ACN was that it provided an opportunity structure for organizations with minimal financial resources such as the NFU to have their message heard on the national stage. This allowed the NFU to

mobilize in a situation where a lack of resources would have prevented the organization from taking advantage of the opportunity structures arising out of the free trade debates.

For most of its history the NFU has attempted to work within the state structures and institutions to bring about change, which as Katzenstein (1998) argues, has the tendency to cause the organization to be more interested in creating 'influence seeking politics' as opposed to 'radical discursive politics.' This historical context for mobilization has created an interesting dichotomy within the organization. The changing character of the economic and political system from liberal compromise to global free enterprise has lessened political opportunities available to affect government policy by influencing politics through state institutions.

This new system has in turn reshaped much of the NFU's politics towards a more radical discourse. However, the organization still attempts to play by 'the rules of the game' and influence the government through legitimate structures. This has created a tension between the NFU's often strategic interests and its more transformative visions of a global sustainable agricultural system. This tension between the radical and strategic often becomes a debate over where the priorities of the organization should be, whether focussed on maintaining transportation subsidies for western farmers, or creating a global agriculture network that will provide food sovereignty for all people in the world.

In this debate, the NFU is aided by its historical roots in the Keynesian period. While the effectiveness of working within the establishment has diminished, most members still accept this type of action as one of the main functions of a farm organization (thus it is important that the NFU continues to meet with politicians and

government agencies). Further, the immediate crisis in family farming in Canada provides impetus for strategic action on issues such as marketing boards and transportation costs domestically. This is where the real tension lies, with the possible perception by some members that the NFU is ignoring specific domestic problems such as farm support programs in favour of a more broad, transformative vision for the entire sector globally. How the NFU deals with this is a bit more difficult to define. While the tension is certainly there, the response by the NFU is that its primary concern is still domestic issues. However, these issues on the domestic level are now affected by the actions and policies of actors on a regional and international level. This must necessarily bring in other issues, as well as actors. Further, the NFU argues that its broader, less strategic visions of the future of agriculture are an important part of the strategic interests of many farmers. If the organization manages to transform the sector, then domestic problems such as transportation and government support will be solved, and the world will also be better off (the proverbial two birds and one stone).

Finally, the very framing process of the NFU incorporates this tension. By applying the agrarian myth and a sense of moral obligation that farmers are meant to protect natural resources such as the soil around the globe, the organization justifies its vision of a sustainable farming system while uniting farmers internationally. Within the same process, support for subsidies and domestic protections is first expanded to cover all members of the agrarian profession, and then justified as a necessary part of sustaining family and peasant farmers who are the stewards of the agrarian myth (NFU, Nov. 2001).

The NFU as an organization has faced many challenges in the past. It is even now

fighting its way back from decreased membership, particularly in Ontario. One of the ways the national office is doing this is through a significant promotion of the NFU - Ontario (NFU-O). The NFU-O has made a substantial comeback in the past few years, with membership at around 800 in 2003 as opposed to 100 three years ago. The latest move has been to gain accreditation in Ontario as a General Farm Organization (GFO)²⁷. Accreditation, which was granted in September of 2002, is an important step in the revitalisation project of the NFU-O that was begun two years ago. This accreditation is expected to boost the number of memberships in the province significantly. These new members will be added to the organization which in 2002 had doubled to over 200 farm families among the fourteen locals in the province. The accreditation as a GFO is important as it allows the NFU-O to be one of three GFOs on the Farm Business Registration Form²⁸. This will allow the NFU to increase its funding by providing the opportunity of farm families to choose to join the NFU through the registration process.

It is interesting to note that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) challenged the accreditation, but failed to prevent the NFU from being placed on the Form. At the heart of the matter is the possible loss by the OFA of some of its 40,000 members in Ontario to the NFU-O. The OFA also argues that according GFO status to

²⁷GFOs are the farm organizations to which farmers must pay a membership fee in order to be eligible for their Farm Tax Credit. As such, it is an important area of revenue for the organizations, and an important milestone for the NFU in Ontario.

²⁸The Farm Business Registration Form is filled out by every farmer. In order to receive the Farm Tax Credit, one of the 'boxes' that must be checked is which GFO the organization fee that every farmer must pay will go to. Up until 2003, the choices were the OFA and the CFFO, now farmers may also choose NFU.

the NFU will accomplish nothing but the further segmentation of the farm population in Ontario. While this might arguably be true, the OFA's policies are so decidedly different from the NFU and of many farmers, that they could not hope to fairly represent all of the farmers in Ontario, organic and small farmers especially (this will be discussed in further detail below) (NFU, Oct. 2002). It is also interesting to note that the other GFO in Ontario, the Christian Family Farm Organization (CFFO) was fully supportive of the NFU's attempt to gain accreditation, suggesting that the two organizations share some common ground.

Contemporary Farm Organizations

Other than the NFU, there are three other prominent farm organizations working in Ontario: the OFA, the CFA, and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO).

The CFFO is a general farm organization interested in a broad range of agricultural, rural and social issues that impact the quality of family life and the family businesses of its members. The CFFO as an organization is committed to applying the Christian faith and its precepts to farm practices and farm policy. Through the fundamental values of Christianity, the organization has shaped its commitment to farm practices and the management of farm businesses. The Organization argues that stewardship is a balancing act between the economic value that food production is given with the enduring value of creation, which include people, family, land, plants and, animals (CFFO, Feb. 2003). Of all of the major farm organizations in Ontario, the CFFO is probably the closest in intent to the NFU. Both organizations are fundamentally

committed to preserving the family farm system.²⁹

The CFA and OFA are similar organizations, as the OFA is a member of the CFA. Both of these organizations often come into conflict with the NFU over farm policy. The OFA and CFA are more strategic in their actions and framing than the NFU, and neither are looking to radically change the system. Further, both organizations tend towards a policy of 'accept what is given, and try not to question too much, since this is probably as good as it will get.'

The CFA is a national umbrella organization. It was formed in 1935 as a way to provide a unified voice for Canadian farmers. Today it represents provincial farm organizations and national commodity groups. Overall, it represents over 200,000 Canadian farm families through its affiliated provincial organizations (CFA, 2003). According to the CFA policy handbook the ultimate goal for the organization is the maintenance (or perhaps creation) of a strong, vibrant, self-sustaining agriculture sector with a thriving rural economy and society with agriculture at its heart. The CFA also believes in the need for a free agriculture market that will allow farmers to effectively compete in world markets.

Within the whole politics of farming, the CFA tends to play the role of mediator between different farm organizations and between farmers and the federal government. As such, it tries to represent all farmers in Canada. While this is an admirable goal to have, as some NFU members point out, in the system of agriculture today, one cannot

²⁹For more information on the CFFO's vision of agriculture please see: <http://www.christianfarmers.org/vision/visiondoc-2003.pdf>.

properly represent the small family farm, while simultaneously promoting large scale industrial agriculture and the agribusinesses which that system supports (Slater interview, 2003).³⁰

The CFA is an excellent example of how reliance on legitimized avenues of contestation can detract from the ability of an organization to form a radical discourse. The CFA operates as a go between for its members and AAFC. Over its history, this has necessitated a close working relationship with the government ministry, through institutional strictures, often in the role of information provider, which has allowed it opportunity to influence policy. As well, in the past the government has used the organization as a means of legitimacy among farmers. Often, when politicians have ‘tours’ of rural areas in reference to rural issues they are accompanied by either a member of the CFA’s board of directors, or a member of the provincial organization (for example the OFA). Further, exacerbating the organization’s dependence on legitimized institutions, the CFA also performs the role of conciliator among its member organizations. According to Barry Wilson (1990) the CFA provides a forum within which regional or inter-commodity tensions are debated, resolved, and turned into a single stance, which is then taken to the government. CFA president Bob Friesen argues that what is needed most within the farming community is solidarity among regions and producers: “Solidarity is good. When we go to the minister, let’s make sure he knows that [we are unified]” (Quoted in Boyens, 2001: 201). This role, while admirable, often

³⁰For more information on the CFAs policy on GMOs and labelling please see: <http://www.cfa-fca.ca/english/publications/Oct-01/CFA-on-C-287.pdf>

causes more divisions than it solves by placing the CFA in a position where it must try to represent all types of farming and many commodity groups. This means, that the CFA must represent both those groups (mostly commodity groups and large farms) who feel free trade is the path of the future, and those (mostly smaller, more diverse farms) who are against free trade and argue the system is hurting the farming sector.

Thus, in regards to free trade, the CFA's policy gives concessions to both sides (though by NFU standards very few to farmers who might be anti-free trade). According CFA vice-president Marvin Shauf (quoted in Wilson, 2002), while multinational companies have benefited from trade deals, so too have farmers. As to the question of corporate concentration, he argues that it would have happened anyway. Further, echoing government policy, Shauf argues that it is not free trade that is hurting farmers, but foreign subsidies that have driven down commodity prices and deprived farmers of some of the expected benefits from free trade. As will be discussed below, the NFU consistently argues that subsidies have little or no effect on Canadian farmers' livelihoods, but instead argue that government policy is facilitating the takeover by multinationals of the agriculture sector and allowing small farmers to be forced out of business.

The final important organization in Ontario is the OFA. As a member organization of the CFA the two organizations share very similar mandates, though the OFA is more focussed on the farm issues arising out of Ontario. The OFA is the largest voluntary general farm organization in the country, with more than 40,000 members and 30 organizational members and affiliates representing most agricultural commodity

groups in Ontario. The mandate of the OFA includes working to ensure that all levels of government hear Ontario farmers' concerns (OFA, 2002)³¹. Much like the CFA, the OFA works within the institutional structures of the state. According to the NFU-O (Slater, Feb. 2003; Slater interview, 2003; Dowling interview, 2003) the OFA's primary focus is the large scale farms in Ontario, and the policies which will increase the number of large farms. This leads many members of the NFU to argue that the OFA is a mouthpiece for the government, since AAFC policies also mainly support large scale farming. Adding to this perception are the alliances that many of the OFA leaders appear to have with OMAFRA. Recently, the OFA vice-president, Ron Bonnett has been 'on tour' with minister of agriculture Helen Johns, promoting the nutrient management system which the provincial government is pushing through³². Bonnett's actions and conciliatory nature towards the minister during the community meetings has angered many farmers, who are arguing that the OFA should not be seeming to pander to the Ontario government, especially when a large number of its members do not support the legislation (Robertson, 2003; Slater, Mar. 2003).

In Ontario the OFA and NFU are often totally incompatible with each other, heading in different policy directions, and aiming for totally different agriculture systems.

³¹For more information on the OFA policies please see:
http://www.ofa.on.ca/whatwedo/publications/OFA_policy_handbook.pdf.

³²In the wake of the Walkerton disaster, the Ontario government has created legislation that will control how farmers dispose, store, and use animal waste on their farms. While few farmers are arguing that such legislation is not needed, many are angry over the disorganized way it has been put together, and the fact that the province is leaving the farmers to foot the bill of converting their farms in order to be compliant with the new legislation.

Perhaps the most divisive, outside of the OFA's general support for large farms, is OFA's policy on free trade which echoes government policy and is antithetical to the NFU position:

[The] OFA will continue to work with our government officials to achieve greater market access for our products, to ensure marketing boards and the producers they represent can continue to operate successfully, and that, on an international scale, subsidies are reduced as a means of levelling the trading arena floor (Wilkinson, 2002: 1).

The division between both the CFA and OFA and the NFU can also be seen in the stance the OFA (and the CFA) took on labelling of GM products. Both these organizations sided with the corporations and government in the decision that any labelling should be voluntary only (CFA, 2001). The NFU, which has a strong anti-GM stance, argues that GM foods must be labelled, framing it as both a consumer health issue and as the right of farmers who are GM free to differentiate their products from those containing GMOs. As will be discussed below, such differences in policy are allowing the NFU to make some small inroads into the OFA membership. As globalization and free trade continue to facilitate policy shifts within the government, create new grievances, and greater opportunities for mobilization, the radical discourse and framing of the NFU is becoming more relevant to an increasing number of farmers.

The NFU claims a more radical position on most issues in comparison to the OFA and CFA, both of whose policies so closely resemble those of AAFC and OMAFRA that it appears to many farmers that the OFA and CFA are just following the government's lead at the expense of the small farmers. Both the CFA and OFA are examples of how farm organizations were moderated and co-opted during the post World War Two period.

Aided by the conciliatory nature of the Keynesian welfare state, the Canadian government often provided farm organizations such as the OFA and NFU with opportunities to influence policy through state structures. The relationship that this created between the government and farm organizations limited their ability to produce a radical discourse and allowed the government to co-opt many of the framing processes which the organizations created. This close alliance has continued between the OFA, CFA and state elites and still affects the organizations' policies. The NFU, meanwhile, has lost or abandoned many of the links with government institutions and so has been able to successfully create a radical critique of government policy and free trade in general.

While the OFA and CFA attempt to represent the values and interests of family farms, these issues are sometimes lost or left behind as the organizations accept the liberal rhetoric and just 'take what they can get'. As will be discussed below, while both organizations sometimes speak out against government policy, many members of the NFU believe these occasions are far too few (Mills interview, 2003). By relying on legitimized avenues of contestation, these two organizations must ensure their own accountability to institutional authority. This detracts from the power of farmer activists within the organizations to make a radical challenge to the authority of the institution or state. This provides opportunities for the NFU to step in and represent those farmers who either silenced by the conciliatory attitudes of the OFA and CFA or not represented by their views on trade, GMOs, and nutrient management. Since the NFU has less recourse to institutional structures, a more radical discursive politics has been fostered, which is now challenging the very foundations of free trade and economic globalization.

The NFU as an Alternative Organization

In the past few years, the membership in the NFU-O has been steadily growing as the national organization has successfully taken advantage to new opportunity structures arising out of the globalizing process. Part of this is the increased publicity that the NFU has gained over certain key issues (such as the rBGH campaign discussed below). However, another important factor in the growing membership numbers is also the inability or unwillingness of other farm organizations to effectively represent some sectors of the farming system (specifically small, diversified and sustainable operations).

In Ontario there are other choices for farm representation. The largest, as discussed earlier, is the OFA. It represents more farmers than any other organization in Canada, however, it is facing a challenge in Ontario at the moment from the growing provincial wing of the NFU.

The OFA has represented farmers in Ontario for as long as the NFU has existed, and while the accreditation has helped increase the number of members in the NFU-O, there are many farmers who turned away from the OFA prior to that taking place. For many NFU members the OFA, and the CFA, no longer represent small farmers, nor the issues that are most important to them. The CFA is often considered to be too close to AAFC for it to represent farmers adequately or fairly, its institutional links limiting any radical critique it might produce. The OFA has also in recent years begun to promote agricultural practices that apply mainly to the big farms, and has shown a lack of interest in alternative forms of farming, and many of the issues important to the smaller farmers. While often promoting government policy unquestioningly, the OFA and CFA argue that

farmers are lucky to be receiving what they are, and the best policy is to not 'rock the boat.' While the loss of family farms is terrible, the farm community must just accept that farms which cannot survive are a necessary part of the restructuring of the farm sector. Indeed, according to the President of the NFU, Stuart Wells, after a meeting in May of 2002 with cabinet ministers and other politicians, both the CFA and OFA took unilateral action and confirmed farmer support for the government's new spending plans in the APF, which will provide the lowest levels of support in the past 17 years in Ontario. The two organizations, according to Wells, broke a collusion with other farm groups and sided with the government's policies, which in turn weakened the united front against the APF (Wells speech, 2003).

The most common reason that current NFU members give for choosing the Union over the OFA, is the direct membership structure of the NFU. Direct membership allows farm families to directly participate and contribute to the debate at all levels of the organization. The OFA, meanwhile, is set up through local federations of agriculture. According to Peter Dowling, "the OFA with its federated structure, cannot offer that option [direct participation at all levels, not just the local] to farmers... The NFU is a hands on operation where farmers do much of the analysis and develop policy" (Dowling interview, Feb 2003).

The other distinction that farmers often make surrounds the framing process and the issues that the NFU brings forward as opposed to those which the OFA focuses on. The NFU appeals to David Lewington, the NFU Youth Coordinator for Ontario, because "the NFU will stick up for small farmers, even if that means making negative statements

about mega barns for example. I like the focus of the NFU towards sustainable agriculture, and connecting with consumers via direct marketing efforts” (Lewington interview, Mar. 2003). Lewington has had experience with the OFA to back up this comparison. He once sat on the Huron Federation of Agriculture (a federation of the OFA) as a director:

I often found myself on the ‘other’ side of the arguments at those board meetings, and found it to be a bit of an ‘old boys club’ so to speak. At one point I had missed a couple of meetings in a row, and the president phoned up and encouraged me to come out, saying that although my input was often different than many of the other directors, that they need that. The next meeting ended up having a lively discussion about the OFA’s lack of effort or discussion around corporate control issues and so on, and ... one director told me that maybe I should be a NFU member instead. That was my last term on the Huron Federation of Agriculture (Lewington interview, Mar.2003).

While the NFU is using a framing process focussed on the plight of small and medium sized farmers and the need to create sustainable agriculture systems, the CFA and OFA have both maintained much closer contact with the institutions and elites, and have maintained a much more conciliatory stance toward the changes taking place through free trade and globalization. Both the CFA and OFA have increased the links with the corporate interests in agriculture, as well as creating closer ties to government ministries. This focus necessarily causes less criticism of corporate agri-businesses and their practices. While on specific issues the OFA can hold similar opinions to the NFU, on a day to day basis, however, the discourse that comes out of the OFA is aimed primarily at the large farm producers, and not at the small, more diversified farmers. As Don Mills recalls:

The day I realised that the OFA was not for me, was when I received a publication

from them, and the main article was how to plant one hundred acres of corn efficiently and quickly. Well, I don't have one hundred acres in seed, let alone want to plant it all in corn, the OFA seems to me, to do what the government often does, and apply the theory of 'one-size-fits-all', and that is simply not true, and leads to bad policy and bad representation (Mills interview, Feb. 2003).

This lack of representation has caused a growing disconnection among many OFA members with the head organization. As David Lewington stated above, the OFA's inability to represent the issues he thought were important as a diverse small farmer, led him from that organization to the NFU, which successfully frames the grievances held by most small farmers and allows both direct involvement with the full organization as well as representation of the issues that were effecting his farm, and his livelihood. This has in turn provided the opportunity for the NFU to take up a position, and mobilize around issues, that are not covered by the other main farm organizations. The space that has opened up is one that is tied to issues such as sustainable agriculture, organics, and direct marketing. Further, the direct membership structure of the organization allows for the values and beliefs of these farmers to become part of Union's policy. As such, it is possible to argue that the NFU may be representing the future of farming in Canada (at least as long as the family farm remains the primary form of farming). As more small farmers become disillusioned with the lack of representation in the OFA, the NFU-O will not only grow in size and income, but the views of the new members will quickly be incorporated into the policies of the Union. It will be fascinating to watch, if this scenario in fact plays out.

The Crisis - Transnationals, Free Trade, and Globalization

A brief sketch of the NFU policies that have been adopted at the annual federal

conventions up until November 2001, reveals the wide range of topics that the organization feels impact on farmers and rural communities. These issues range from promoting sustainable forms of agriculture to the continuation of the CBC as a public broadcaster. The main area of concern throughout the past 34 years however, has been the maintenance of a strong rural community with small and medium sized farms as its backbone. The desire to maintain this type of system is linked not only with the welfare of NFU members, but also with the understanding that a sustainable system will also provide a safe and stable food supply system for all members of society. It is within this context that the NFU is responding to the crisis in family farming that has become deeply embedded within the system during the past 20 years.

For the NFU, the root causes of many of the problems arising in rural Canada today are the direct result of free trade and the Canadian government's willing acceptance of the neo-liberal policies that are part and parcel of the agreements. The NFU firmly believes that the food industries, oriented toward export agriculture as they are today, are destroying the principles of good farm production, which should be based on ownership and management by individuals and control over production resources by farm people. Perhaps the 'Catch-22' of this ideal system of agriculture production is that as individuals, farmers are unable to exert influence on the marketplace and are left to compete against and exploit one another. Thus, the NFU is attempting to create a framing process which links the many grievances of farmers together so that they might bring their collective will to bear when dealing with the agribusinesses or governments in Canada.

As the free market ideology becomes firmly entrenched within the agriculture

sector, the nature of the political system has become more closed and less responsive to demands made by organizations such as the NFU. This, along with increasing alliances among the global elites (through continuing mergers among TNCs and the close relationships between many governments and corporations), has shaped the nature of the collective action that the NFU is organizing. In many ways, the system as it exists today has created a situation where the action taken by movement organizations must either be radical, or conciliatory. In the case of the NFU, a lack of elite alliances (unlike the CFA and OFA) has further led it down the path towards radical alternative action.

For the NFU, a crisis in agriculture is one that directly affects the family farm. From here the wider repercussions spread out, first impacting on rural Canada, which is “an essential part of our national culture and ... [thus] farmers must continue to hold a distinct place in the national identity as the basic producers of food” (NFU, Nov, 2001: A-1). This in turn affects those who “intend to buy, eat, and enjoy food” (Wiebe, 2001). The NFU argues that the importance of family farms cannot be overstated, nor can their growing obsolescence within the neo-liberal economic system. It is to this threat of not just their livelihood, but also their way of life, that has caused many farmers throughout the past two centuries to mobilize and promote change. As such, the NFU is similar to many of the historical agrarian movements that came before it. The main exceptions lie in the ever increasing depopulation of rural Canada and the wider links with civil society which the organization has cultivated.

In the view of the NFU, the fight is no longer about subsidies or government policy, except for what they facilitate. The farm crisis has become a fight between market

ideologues and the small producers who no longer fit neatly into the market, and the NFU has given itself a mandate to actively resist this system of agriculture. As one member of the NFU, Bruce Hunter, argues:

I am a strong supporter of the idea that the structural and technological changes being experienced by agricultural production both in Canada and throughout the world can not go unchallenged. As individuals within the agricultural community, we must adopt policies and actions that will redefine how the production of and the distribution of food is carried out. The concentration of market power in the hands of a few multinational corporations must be challenged (Hunter interview, Mar. 2003).

The NFU believes that it is fighting to create a different system, one that allows for diversity, smaller size, and sustainable production. That this fight falls within the paradigm of globalization is a fact that the NFU does not ignore. It recognizes that policies made in Canada now not only affect Canadian farmers, but also those in other nations, such as Mexico, and vice-versa. Indeed, Canada's embrace of free trade and liberal economic globalization has placed the NFU within the context of the anti-globalization movement. This has forced the organization to recognize the importance of international forces over the policies of protectionism at a national level. In the past decades the NFU has not only worked as a movement organization domestically, it has also worked to build transnational cooperation between activists in other nations in order to effect social change. The culmination of these efforts has been the creation and support of the transnational social movement, *Vía Campesina*, which is discussed below. The growing transnationalism of the organization has also led to an increased level of radicalism due to both the influence of other more radical organizations, but also because there is a severe lack of formal institutions on the global level that allow effective and

legitimate participation by social movements.

The NFU has, in the past decades, begun to recognize the importance of solidarity networks with other civil society organizations (including labour) and also international agrarian movements. In fact, one of the NFUs main movement strategies is to educate farmers and facilitate transnational solidarity networks beyond state boundaries so that farmers will learn to “live with one another rather than off one another. Through mutual co-operation and collective action” (NFU, Nov 2001: A-1). In contrast to the OFA and CFA the organization is strongly opposed to economic globalization. One NFU member, Peter Dowling, succinctly argues that “globalization is about pitting farmer against farmer around the world” (Dowling interview, Feb. 2003). As Rick Salutin (2003) recently pointed out, globalization is not just about trade, wealth, or economics, but is in fact about whose voices count in the matter of running the world. For farmers, specifically the NFU, the voices that seem to matter are those of the transnationals, which (simplistically put) are the cause and the continuation of the farm crisis.

For the NFU, the root of the crisis in the farm system today begins, and will finish, with transnational agribusinesses and the networks which they have formed with other global elites and governments. The NFU argues that since the 1980s, the governments of Canada have given up control over agriculture to these TNCs. It is a commonly held view among many farmers that the current policies of the Liberal government have managed to promote the agendas of the agribusiness corporations over that of the small family farmer. This single enemy is a power unifying force in the framing process, and is effectively bringing many farmers together to prevent the

wholesale takeover by these massive corporations. The common enemy of the TNC has allowed the NFU to expand the framing process beyond farmers to the general polity over issues such as GMOs and mega-hog barns. The nature of the growing links between TNCs through mergers and joint ventures is also an important fact in how the NFU is shaping its collective action in an increasingly radical manner, especially as the state continues to reduce the number of legitimate avenues that the NFU has to influence policy.

The vision for agriculture held by the NFU is a broad world picture of sustainable family farming based primarily on domestic production and trading only in surplus goods. The 'influence seeking' policies of the organization, which still exist next to its growing radical framing, include often repeated recommendations to government committees where the NFU attempts to 'legitimately' affect policy and cause the government to reflect a sustainable small scale vision of agriculture. Still attempting to work within the current system to change it, the NFU believes that to adequately address the problems of family farming, government support programs must contain three main elements. The first is a Pooled Stabilization Program (PSP) which is similar to NISA except the funds are pooled and held collectively, with a further enhancement of what the CI program can cover and insure. Also included in the NFU recommendations is a production formula that guarantees farmers receive at least the cost of production for harvests aimed at domestic markets.

The organization promotes a framework that rejects globalization of food production and marketing. The NFU believes the system is entirely controlled by

multinational corporations, none of whom have the best interest of farmers at heart. By displacing farmers within the system, and actively promoting the changing political system, TNCs provide an important common enemy for farmers to mobilize around and act against. Further, the international nature of TNCs has also facilitated the broadening of organizations such as the NFU, as it works to meet the 'common enemy' on its own ground. The wholesale takeover of the system by international companies is antithetical to the NFU's goals of a publicly planned agriculture and food distribution system. As an organization it is working to "build a people's movement which will examine the effects of the blatant world market forces on the future of farming and food production in Canada" (NFU, Nov. 2001: Z-5).

The NFU recognizes, and is fighting to challenge, the weaknesses of the position of farmers in the global economy by creating a broader and more encompassing framing process. While markets and corporations have internationalized their systems, farmers have remained rooted to particular fields. Farming, after all, is not a mobile business, and this places the farmer at a serious disadvantage in the global market. As the former President of the NFU, Nettie Wiebe, argued in 1996, farmers are rooted to the places where they live and grow food. The corporate world meanwhile, is globally mobile. Farmers cannot move their gardens around the world, and nor do they want to. What farmers need to recognize is that there are people like them everywhere in the world. "What we need to do is build bridges of solidarity with each other which respect that unique place each of us have in our own community, in our own country. These bridges will unite us on those issues or in those places where we have to meet at a global level"

(Nettie Wiebe, 1996; Quoted in Desmarais, 2002: 108).

Response - From the Local to the Global

The main framing process of the NFU has always been closely linked to the welfare of the family farm. In the post World War Two period, this mandate was fulfilled through applying pressure to government institutions and fighting for marketing boards and supply management systems. Since the 1980s and the disembedding of the liberal compromise, the NFU has lost much of the access it once had to government institutions, and the government is not as responsive as it once was to the organization's demands. These new circumstances, along with the growth of free trade, have created new political opportunity structures and new arenas for action on issues such as free trade in agriculture.

The NFU is taking advantage of these new opportunities on both the domestic and international level. The framework for action by the NFU is now more based on how trade agreements to which Canada is a signatory are hampering the success and livelihoods of small and medium sized farmers rather than pressuring the government to create new support programs (though this is still important). By broadening the framing process to create solidarity and mobilization beyond the Canadian farm community, the NFU has spread its focus to a broader range of issues that include direct marketing, sustainable agriculture, climate change, global food sovereignty, health, and international development. By creating a broader framework for activism, the NFU has also begun to form alliances with other movement organizations, both domestically and internationally and participate in movement coalitions.

Participating in coalitions among movement organizations, while vital to success, also comes with a number of attached dilemmas. One example, and an issue farm organizations have been wrestling with since the Grange arose in the 1800s, is the incorporation of contradictory interests into the organization. As discussed in a previous chapter, prior to the CCF, most farm organizations in Canada never managed to successfully create coalitions across industries, and many fought to keep their organization's 'farmer only'. As many of the past farmer organizations discovered, however, alliances with other organizations based on common interests, grievances, and ideologies are an important part of mobilizing support and collective action for an organization.

Currently, the NFU has formed several alliances with different organizations. Domestically, the organization relies on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), and CoC (discussed in greater detail below) as its two main allies. The relationship is reciprocal. While the NFU needs the other organizations' resources and activist networks, both the CCPA and CoC need the NFU to provide some legitimacy when they are framing and mobilizing around agricultural issues (it works in a similar fashion to the relationship between the OFA and OMAFRA discussed above). As well, many of the difficulties of incorporating the different interests of the three groups is avoided by maintaining a loose alliance where by the organizations still act individually on specific issues.

In the past few decades, the NFU has begun to recognize that an increasing number of political opportunity structures are arising on an international level. Since the

first free trade debate, this realisation has altered somewhat, the focus of the NFU from domestic to intergovernmental and international framing. Prior to the 1980s, as is discussed in a previous chapter, agriculture had been left almost entirely to the purview of domestic policy, which in turn affected the focus of farm organizations such as the NFU. With the renegotiation of the GATT in the late 1980s and the introduction of the FTA around the same time, the NFU's focus shifted in response to changing political opportunities and state actions. While the federal and provincial governments are still important factors in NFU policy, the organization is increasingly focussing on the effects of international bodies, agreements, and corporations. This in turn has eventually led to a greater understanding of, and allegiances with, agrarian groups in other nations (particularly in the South, who are often construed to be in competition with northern farmers).

As with domestic alliances, the coalitions that the NFU is a part of on the international level (TSMOs) also contain problems conflicts in successful framing and mobilization. The differences between the organizations are perhaps even more extreme than in the domestic alliances, as not only do the different groups face different issues, but these grievances are also framed through different cultures, and often through different opportunity structures. As will be discussed below, the main TSMO to which the NFU is aligned is Vía Campesina. Here, peasant farmer organizations from the South and family farmer organizations from the North have joined together under the common frame of anti-free trade, anti-TNCs, and sustainable agriculture. However, there are still differences between the organizations which need to be negotiated if the TSMO is to be

successful in mobilizing action on an international scale. Transnational action is often complicated by the fact that different national contexts offer varying opportunities for mobilization and political action. The complications within the Vía Campesina (which mostly centre around culture and opportunity structures) include acceptable types of farming and farming practices and the manner of mobilization (particularly in the South the lack of state response and repressive nature creates a drastic difference in how activists mobilize, the level of radical discourse, and even the number of activists and members who participate).

Perhaps the most potentially divisive and complicated issue the TSMO incorporates is protective subsidies. While nations such as the United States and Canada provide subsidies (no matter how small) to farmers in order to cushion the harsh reality of the international free market, in the South, through SAPs, nations have been forced to remove all subsidies that once might have protected peasants and small farmers (a primary example would be Mexico after the Peso crash in the 1990s). The NFU is a supporter of subsidies for Canadian farmers, but there is conflict over this, as these subsidies make it even more difficult for the unprotected peasants and small farmers in the South to survive.

Dilemmas such as the role of subsidies in farming communities are most successfully dealt with through dialogue. One of the strengths of TSMOs is that they create the possibility for greater communication between movement organizations. As is discussed below, for the NFU, this opportunity has altered its framework to incorporate issues of other organizations. Thus, in the case of subsidies, the NFU accepts that support

in the form of tariff and non-tariff barriers destroys the livelihoods of many farmers in the South. From this understanding, the TSMO has created a common framing process for its members, which articulates the need for each nation to support small and peasant farmers in order to produce for domestic consumption, and only trade in surpluses. By creating this common framing process and providing inter-organizational resources, TSMOs such as the Vía Campesina, allow organizations to better understand the differences of their counterparts and take advantage of them.

The shift in focus towards regional and international issues has not come without criticism. Indeed, the NFU often faces backlash from farmers and other farm organizations. Many are either ideologically opposed to the food system the NFU is working to create, or feel that farm issues belong on the farm, and should not be transposed to wider problems on an international stage where Canadian farmers are just one voice among many. The NFU answers these challenges by framing both domestic and international grievances as being based on the same basic issue that can only be solved through the creation and support of a family/peasant farm system the world over. As the organization's trade policy states:

The Canadian federal and provincial governments must work with farmers, rural residents, and all citizens to establish a food production, distribution, and trade system in Canada and around the world which would ensure ... That the means of producing ... food remains in the hands of peasants, small and medium-sized farmers, and indigenous peoples; both men and women [and] ... food producers receive a fair and adequate return for their work [and] ... every country has the right to adopt all necessary measures to ensure the preceding goals ... (NFU, Nov. 2001: Z-2).

The first highly organized action that the NFU took part in, which linked many

different groups together while shifting some of the focus to the regional if not yet the international stage, was the FTA debate in the late 1980s. Much of the broader actions and policies of that campaign took place through the links that the NFU formed through the ACN.

NFU and Free Trade

In 1986 the NFU became actively involved, along with many other organizations, in the free trade debate over the introduction of the FTA by the Mulroney government. While the struggle was not yet taking place on an international scale, the fundamental shift in policy by the Conservative government towards a system of free trade broadened the domestic arena of opportunity structures in which organizations such as the NFU could take part. Indeed, all the factors necessary for mobilization were available. The political opportunity structures had been created through the shift in government policy, there was a great deal of solidarity among not only members of the NFU, but also between diverse civil society organizations, and finally, the ACN provided the necessary existent organization and resources that were needed for the NFU to take advantage of the political upheaval and growing solidarity against free trade.

As the political process model indicates, movement organizations most often arise during times of change in the institutional roles, political alignments, and alliance structures of the dominant groups (McAdam et al, 1997). While the NFU was not a new organization, the period of the first free trade debate in Canada contained the above criteria, and certainly facilitated a growth in the NFU and a more diverse role for the farm organization in Canadian politics. The upheavals caused by the Mulroney government's

shift in policies and the circumstances which were attached to that increased the momentum of the NFU (and other organizations) by creating more, and new, forms of opportunities for aggrieved groups to press their claims.

Between 1986 and 1989, the NFU was heavily involved in the anti-free trade fight, both on its own and in partnership with the ACN. This included a massive rally that was held in Ottawa in 1987 that drew thousands of civil society activists of which 4000 were farmers from Ontario and Quebec (NFU, April 2001). The NFU and its members took part in many mass demonstrations during this period, while also continuing to submit reports to government committees and commissions in an attempt to provide an alternative view for the future of farming. Submitting reports is a common tactic of the NFU and is evidence of the continuing desire to work with state institutions when the opportunity arises (though it could be argued that its radical stance on many issues makes it more difficult to have its message heard through these channels). While there is often little immediate response from the government, Darrin Qualman, the executive secretary of the NFU, believes that over time much of what the NFU supplies is picked up by the government and AAFC in some form, thus providing some limited success (Qualman personal communication, Mar. 2003).

In April of 1987 the CoC convened the Maple Leaf Summit, where about 100 representatives from 32 national organizations. The groups present included the National Farmers Union along with others such as the Canadian Labour Congress, GATT-Fly, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women decided to work together under the banner of the Pro-Canada Network (later to be renamed the Action Canada Network)

to fight free trade. The Network's first meeting was in October of 1987, and included both national and provincial organizations. It was organized primarily as an information sharing venue where organizations brought their concerns to the table. The ACN began a more proactive approach late in 1987 providing analysis of the FTA completed by academics and researchers to its members, and lobbying political leaders and opposition parties. The network also began to demand a federal election before the trade agreement was signed, which led to the Conservatives to call an election in 1988. During the 1988 federal election campaign the ACN provided information and briefing notes to the opposition parties, held rallies, and distributed information to the public (Bleyer 1997). The outcome of the election and the subsequent passage of the trade agreement was a blow to many of those who had been active in the debate, and this would be reflected in the future fight against the expansion of trade through the NAFTA. For farmers such as Alan Slater what came after the FTA debate did not really matter: "The day that we lost the FTA debate, I just about cried, I will never forget it, I just felt so low. And NAFTA, well it didn't change anything much, just watered down what was left a little more" (Slater interview, Feb. 2003).

Later campaigns initiated by the ACN included alternative budgets and a fair tax campaign against the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The new mandate also brought in additional groups including Oxfam Canada and the Canadian Federation of Students, as well as unique solidarity pacts between students, seniors, anti-poverty groups and unions, and the NFU. Taking part in actions led by the ACN provided the NFU with the opportunity to widen its scope of criticism of the liberal economic system and create the

necessary links for effective action with like minded groups that still exist today.

When the NAFTA negotiations began, the ACN developed ties with other popular-sector groups in the United States and Mexico³³, which allowed the NFU, through the ACN, to broaden its contact with other farm organizations beyond Canada's national boundaries. In May of 1993, 100,000 people gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to voice their concern over NAFTA. It was during the anti-GATT and anti-NAFTA demonstrations in 1993, that the NFU helped to found the Vía Campesina movement (discussed in further detail below). Despite the large numbers that came together to protest the latest round of free trade agreements, the ACN had limited influence on the election campaign surrounding the NAFTA issue (Bleyer 1997). Perhaps this was due to the lack of optimism after the failure of the FTA fight. Without a shared conception of grievances and optimism, it is difficult to successfully frame the issue as well as create mobilizing structures that would successfully encourage people to participate.

After 1993, the ACN experienced limited support for campaigns from member organizations and participation in general has declined, consequently calling into question its viability (Bleyer 1997). While the ACN has been in decline, the CoC "continues to experience a vitality and membership growth³⁴ commensurate with its status as one of the few alternative, pan-Canada political vehicles left" (Ayres 1997: 117). The CoC moved

³³In Mexico a network incorporating over one hundred concerned trade unions and citizens groups was modelled after the ACN (Bleyer 1997).

³⁴The membership of the CoC in 1997 exceeded 90,000 people, up from 16,000 members in 1988 (Ayres 1997).

its focus from a slightly left of centre approach to a more radical critique by shifting its framing process from struggling for sovereignty and against free trade to “directly challenging transnational corporations and cultivating links with other citizens’ organizations in other countries” (ibid.). A similar shift in focus has also taken place within the NFU. While it still continues to fight for an alternative to free trade, the organization has broadened its focus to include direct attacks against corporations such as Monsanto (often working in coalition with the CoC on the issues, the latest of which is the fight to prevent RR Wheat introduction in Canada).

The NFU continues to be a harsh critic of the free trade policies embodied in the NAFTA, WTO, and now the FTAA. A large part of this critique flows from the identification by the NFU of the role TNCs played in the formation of the free trade agreements, all of which hamper the success of the family farm. The NFU firmly believes that free trade does nothing but exacerbate the farming crisis. The organization has gone so far as to demand that Canada withdraw from the NAFTA immediately and remove agriculture from the WTO agenda (NFU, Nov. 2001). As Alan Slater, a NFU member in Ontario, argues:

I know it would cause some upheavals, but I can’t see how ordinary people would be hurt by this (pulling out of NAFTA), it would simply mean that their government would have more power than they have had in the past. Our elected governments would start to be answerable to us instead of to the transnational corporations that they answer to now. Now, I’m not saying we wouldn’t notice the difference, it would cause economic upheavals for a time, but we don’t export anything that people don’t want, so they would still want the products. They (corporations) would still want what we are selling. We have resources and cheap labour, so they would groan and complain and some of them would pull out, but then somebody would come back. They pull out for cheaper labour and technology now anyway. But at some point *we are going to have take some*

power back into our own hands and until we do that it is just going to get worse, that's the way I look at it (Slater, interview, February 2003).

One of the fundamental arguments of the NFU is that agriculture does not belong in free trade because it does not work like other systems of production. This is not to say that free trade is acceptable for other sectors of the economy since as mentioned above, the NFU is in principle against free trade. However, as the NFU-O Coordinator Peter Dowling contends:

Agriculture is different from other types of trade - everybody has to eat and so it seems to me the ideal system would involve everybody around the world being able to supply their own needs for food, and we are far from that and far away from attaining that. We have a system where we can produce the cheapest products and everybody pays through the hidden costs of moving food around, like for subsidizing road construction and maintenance. The full costs are not accounted for in bringing the food in from California or across the ocean. All of which make it pretty unsustainable (Dowling interview, Feb. 2003).

The anti-free trade stance of the NFU does not translate, however, into an anti-trade philosophy. While the NFU feels Canada would be better off if it were to withdraw from NAFTA, it does recognize the importance of trade, it would simply prefer it to take a back seat to the policies of domestic food production as Don Mills, the vice-chair for the NFU-O, states:

No one I know in the union [NFU] is against trade - trade has been a part of human culture for eons, almost from the beginning, certainly since domestication and agriculture began people have been trading. So, clearly no wants to put a cap on trade, but its like technology in that just because it is out there does not mean you should just throw open the door and say whatever the hell comes along is fine. We have rules around all sorts of things and I think we need to put some rules around trade and I think we had rules, but we have thrown them away, now all we have are rules about not having any rules, and that is a problem (Mills interview, Feb. 2003).

The International Focus of Domestic Agriculture

At the same time that economic globalization is slicing across geopolitical borders, so too are sites of resistance, social movements are no longer restricted to the 'local'. Organizations such as the NFU are now becoming increasingly regional and global in the scope of their framing and mobilization. It is now necessary to consider not only the national factors that define opportunities for collective actions, but also factors on a regional and international level. In highlighting global policy processes, not only national decisions making structures but also international structures must be taken into account. Further, as Jackie Smith (1997) argues, new and broader cultural contexts, which often involve procedures, rules of access, allies and adversaries, and systems of meaning and value that carry a different meaning than in a national arena must also now be taken into account. According to Doug McAdam (1998), the significance of international political economy should not be swept aside in the analysis of social movement politics especially as international forces often affect the shape of domestic political opportunities available to movement organizations.

In an effort to gain access to the many international political opportunity structures, the NFU has become a part of the TSMO Vía Campesina. As with most TSMOs the primary goal of Vía Campesina is to create a sense of transnational solidarity beyond state boundaries in order to give farmers a global, trans-state identity with strong links of solidarity among all the member organizations. According to Smith (1997), TSMOs are better able to target a variety of national, intergovernmental, and transgovernmental political arenas than the more domestically bound organizations like the NFU. Further, the more the NFU, through Vía Campesina, can aggregate popular

interests into concrete policy demands, the more effective it should be at coordinating global strategy and utilizing political opportunities created by intergovernmental and international institutions (Smith et al, 1997). As will be discussed below, the NFU is continually increasing its links to TSMOs, and through conferences and greater communication is creating international links that are allowing the organization to frame issues on an international level while linking grievances with domestic issues and politics.

In the past decades the NFU has continued to increase its presence on the international stage, and in issues of an international nature. The main cause of this change of focus has been a shifting of control from the domestic to international level through the growth of free trade. As Manuel Castells (2001) argues, many TSMOs have arisen due to the perceived loss of control under the free market system over lives, the environment, governments, jobs, economies and the general fate of the earth.

While the focus on issues has increasingly swung towards internationalism, the NFU also continues to deal with domestic protectionist issues. It is important that the NFU successfully frame the income crisis and the loss of rail lines with international issues and causes, or find a way in which to address these issues in a context other than protectionism. There are still many farmers who believe that the focus should be on domestic issues, and the NFU must successfully incorporate their concerns by framing such issues as intrinsically linked with those on the international stage.

As domestic and international political process become increasingly interdependent, it has become necessary for organizations such as the NFU to take

grievances to an international level. Further, political opportunity structures are now arising on an international level. The NFU has had to incorporate the dynamics of international political economy with national based institutions and individual actions in order to affect both broad social structures and actions at the individual level. In order to provide truly insightful social change the NFU must now successfully draw the linkages between these levels of analysis by drawing out the interrelationships that link the local, the national and the international spheres.

The main growth of the NFU's international critique has taken place over the necessity to meet the transnational agribusinesses on a global level. This has increased the international focus of the NFU and introduced many of the organization's members to the common problems faced by both family farmers in Canada and small scale peasant farmers in the global South.

The role the organization took in the free trade debates and the growing desperation of small farmers changed the focus of the NFU from purely domestic causes and solutions, to a realisation that farmers in Canada were not the only ones under attack by the liberal economic hegemony. This has led to the creation of an international movement called *Vía Campesina*, of which the NFU was a founding member. By becoming a part of a transnational social movement (defined in an earlier chapter), the NFU has shown a determined effort to influence the outcomes of international political decisions. As the discussion below will show, *Vía Campesina* is acting to focus the attention of elites and the general public on agriculture concerns of a global nature, as well as providing information on the political costs for governments who fail to act.

Vía Campesina's founding message from 1993 spoke of the loss of food sovereignty through organizations such as the WTO and agreements such as the FTA and the NAFTA. Vía Campesina also objected to the manner in which these trade organizations were negotiated, without input from civil society. Further, the coalition's founding statement charged the WTO with creating the AoA in the interests of multinational corporations, destroying the capacity for small farmers and peasants around the world to produce food, and in turn causing the destruction of rural communities and the environment (NFU, April 1999; Desmarais, 2002). Thus, Vía Campesina is taking advantage of the opportunity structures that have arisen due to the political upheavals that economic liberalization has created across the world. In doing so, it is linking farm organizations from around the globe and helping to unite them under a common framing process and collective action against the liberal economic system.

As a global farm movement, Vía Campesina brings together organizations of peasants, small and medium sized farmers, farm workers, indigenous farm communities and rural women in different part of Asia, the Americas and Europe in open acts of resistance towards the dominant historic bloc and the drive towards industrialized agriculture and free trade (NFU, April, 2002). The organization is the largest international rural social movement to emerge in recent years. Over 82 farm organizations are represented; which in turn are representatives of millions of farm families from 47 different countries. Vía Campesina has emerged in direct opposition to the form of globalized, industrialized liberal economic agriculture that has been promoted by the WTO. Working collectively, the mandate of the farm movement is to create a

viable alternative to the current model of agriculture, one that is more farmer driven and fundamentally based upon the diversity of the family farm. The core issues that fall under this mandate include: food sovereignty and trade, genetic resources, biodiversity and farmer rights, agrarian reform, human rights and solidarity, gender and rural development, rights of farm workers, migration, and alternative agriculture (NFU, April 2001). As a TSMO, Vía Campesina provides a forum in which organizations can create dialogue across nations, which in turn helps to create consensus around the framing of a problem and the use of appropriate mobilizing structures.

The primary goal of Vía Campesina is to create a sense of transnational solidarity beyond state boundaries among agrarian activists and provide a global, trans-state identity in which a higher loyalty to the creation of a sustainable form of agriculture prevails. In August of 2002, the organization released a new outline of its main proposals (for the full list, please see appendix 4.3). All of the proposals put forward by the Vía Campesina are echoed within the policy statements of the member organizations, including the NFU. These proposals include a reevaluation of large scale food production by governments and international bodies; a sustainable use of resources through a family farm based low input system; an end to the privatization of natural resources; an end to all forms of dumping; and a removal of agriculture and food production from the WTO negotiations. Further, the Vía Campesina places a great deal of importance on promoting food sovereignty:

The concept of food sovereignty has to be part of the concept of sustainable agriculture. Farmers should be able, within the context of the agricultural policies to generate their own production models, according to their conditions and

possibilities. Trade policies must be subsumed under the priorities of food sovereignty and sustainability. Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices. This means that export dumping or subsidized export must cease. Peasants and small farmers have the right to produce essential food staples for their countries and to control the marketing of their products (Vía Campesina, 2002).

Vía Campesina is evidence of not only the emergence of new forms of collective action in rural communities, but also of the growing trend by movement organizations to broaden their focus to a transnational level. In recent history, social movement literature (specifically NSM theory) has bent its focus primarily on the emergence of new urban-based civil society actors, and in turn has virtually ignored actors from rural areas. Because of the primary focus on urban movements, a sense of 'otherness' has increased among rural movements, as if their time had passed, or that they were either out of step with modern political and social issues, or were remnants of a past form of social organizing. The rise of the Vía Campesina has proven that approach wrong, as it claims a greater membership in far more countries than many of its urban social movement counterparts. (Desmarais, 2002).

The NFU has been active on an international setting for several decades now, supporting programs like youth exchanges with farmer organizations in the Caribbean in order to promote future leaders with a broader sense of what was happening to farmers in other parts of the globe. For some, it is surprising that farmers are coming together in this manner on an international level. Agricultural producers have historically been split along not only national lines, but also by what was produced on the farm. According to the Operative Secretary of Vía Campesina, Rafael Alegría, however a strong framing

process has helped to mobilize farmers throughout the world:

What unites us is a fundamental commitment to humanism because the antithesis of this is individualism and materialism. For us in the Vía Campesina the human aspect is a fundamental principle so we see the person, man and woman, as the centre of our reason for being and this is what we struggle for - for the family that is at the centre of all We are all convinced that the current structures of economic, political and social power are unjust and exclusionary, what unites us is a spirit of transformation and struggle to change these structures all over the world,. We aspire to a better world, a more just world, a more humane world, a world where real equity and social justice exist. These aspirations and solidarity in rural struggles keeps us united in the Vía Campesina (Quoted in Desmarais, 2002: 99)

For farmers such as Alan Slater, the differences between the different organizations in not as large a problem as some might think. He sees no difficulty in reconciling the needs of the different farmers within the TSMO. He repeats the call by Vía Campesina for food sovereignty, and argues that for the most part, it is not the actions of farmers in the industrialized North that are destroying the farm sector in the South:

We agree that we need to trade some things, but the first thing we need to do is think about food sovereignty, not food security, but food sovereignty. In other words, the farmers look after their own people first and retain control of that food. It is an important concept that the farmers produce the food and have some say in where it will be sold, the prices that they will get for it, and there will be some sort of negotiation between the people who produce the food and those who consume it as to how it will be produced. Trade when necessary, and when it is trade, fair trade not free trade. Farmers all have the same needs and the same problems caused by transnational corporations (Slater interview, Feb. 2003).

Echoing the sentiments of Vía Campesina, Ann Clark, a professor at the University of Guelph and NFU member, points out that there is a growing understanding of the need for international solidarity in agriculture. At the recent International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) conference held in Vancouver, she says that there was a general consensus that “we will all be impacted by the

consolidation/specialization and control dimensions of globalization, whether in Zimbabwe or in Sudbury. Some regions are far in advance of us, while others are just beginning. We need to identify the causes of our problems, and work together to resolve them” (Clark interview, Feb. 2003). This growing awareness of transnational mobilizing structures has become an important part of the NFU framing process, as through education and activism it works to unite the issues of its local members to issues of peasants and small farmers in other nations.

Through international networks, the NFU is creating links with other movements that are also resisting the dominant discourse of free trade and liberal economics. By adding its voice to those insisting that there is an alternative to industrialized agriculture that is sustainable and capable of providing the world with food, the NFU is helping to create and disseminate an alternative food system, and is pushing for changes within the global civil society.

Global conferences also present opportunities for movements to influence multilateral negotiations by at least heightening the sense of urgency on specific issues such as food safety. These forums bring together social activists from around the world and provide an alternative way for movements to create greater links and a common policy base that can help to unite them on issues of liberal globalization. Perhaps the largest forum in which the NFU takes part along with Vía Campesina, is the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The latest forum was held in January of 2003, and they provide an important opportunity for organizations such as the NFU, through the Vía Campesina, to form greater international links, gain a greater understanding of the issues

facing farmers in other parts of the world and take better advantage of the rising international political opportunity structures which the upheavals caused by globalization are creating.

The NFU also took part in the People's Summit organized in response to the FTAA meetings held in Quebec City in 2001. The Summit drew together many diverse social movements from across the hemisphere to create alternatives to the FTAA, before breaking off into smaller 'issue oriented' groups. The NFU, along with the Vía Campesina, took part in the Agriculture Forum, which produced its own statement on April 19th (see appendix 4.4) outlining the type of agriculture system the groups involved believed was a viable alternative to that suggested in the FTAA draft text. The participants of the Agriculture Forum stated unequivocally that they desired more from the process than an opportunity to sit at the FTAA table and "nibble on crumbs from the poisoned neo-liberal pie" (Union Farmer, 2001: 1).

These links and forums that the NFU participates in are helping to focus the organization's critique of the international economic system and the liberal economic hegemony. This critique, as has been mentioned earlier, frequently returns to an examination and critique of transnational agribusinesses. According to the NFU, farmers face severe disadvantages within the market economy due to the size of TNCs as opposed to the individual farmer. As has been discussed earlier, agribusiness has been following the global trend toward consolidation and concentration of corporations. This has created a significant crisis in the farm sector, which has been further facilitated by the government's response, that farmers must just take what the marketplace can give them

and be thankful that they are even getting that.

Both the crisis and governmental response has created opportunities for mobilization by the NFU, which has responded in a far more radical manner than most other farm organizations in Canada. The NFU argues that to place the system at the feet of the marketplace is ridiculous, because there is no marketplace in agriculture, all that exists is an oligopoly of between 2 and 12 corporations, depending on the sector of production and supply. The marketplace, as it is defined by economists, must cease to exist where there are too few buyers for any one commodity, or too few suppliers of any one resource. Such a situation can not be sustainable and to wait for it to collapse in on itself would be like sitting around waiting for disaster to fall, the system, argues the NFU, needs to be fundamentally overhauled and corrected to avoid catastrophe (Carter, 2003).

Framing Process for an Alternative System

Since the loss of the free trade debates in 1988 and 1994, the NFU has continued its fight for a plethora of issues that affect family farming. Within the framing process, the two most important issues are the push for a return to a system of small sustainable farming and the need to introduce an orderly marketing system.

Sustainable farming is an important frame in its own right, as it provides an alternative to the corporate controlled farm system. This in turn creates room for the NFU to take a definitive position within the mobilizing structures that is not actively represented by other farm organizations. Sustainable agriculture does not necessarily mean only organic production. Defined by the NFU, sustainable agriculture “embraces organic agriculture but also the intermediate steps in the transition from chemical-based,

high synthetic-input agriculture to organic. ... However, the NFU recognizes that it may not be possible for all farmers to farm completely organically”(NFU, Nov. 2001: G-10).

The NFU argues that the food system must not just be economically viable, but also socially just and ecologically sound. Perhaps through an out-growth of the old agrarianism, the NFU believes that “farmers have an obligation to provide safe basic foods and to steward the soil, water, and air” (NFU, Nov. 2001: G-9). Based on this frame, the NFU has solidified farmer grievances around the lack of funding for resources that the provincial and federal governments provide to farm families who are committed to a transition to sustainable agriculture while supporting greater research into new forms of industrial agriculture.

Sustainable agriculture is perhaps one of the most contentious issues that the NFU puts forward. For most farmers, profit is very important, as it is for most businesses. While there is a belief that eventually a return to a form of sustainable agriculture (perhaps organic) will increase profits, either through greater selling prices or lower external input costs, the system is highly labour intensive and is antithetical to much of what farmers have been taught for decades. It is a difficult task which the NFU sets for itself, educating Canadian farmers and convincing them that other methods of farming, while expensive in the short term, will turn out for the betterment of everyone, including the farmer. As NFU member, Alan Slater firmly believes:

[The NFU has to] be the prophet of the small farmers, somebody who has a prophetic voice to see where things are going, where things are going wrong, where things could be corrected. ... [It must come] up with a farm policy in the great vacuum where there is none. And I really stress that the NFU has to be the voice of the small sustainable, environmentally acceptable farming, its got to stake

out a place completely different from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (Slater interview, Feb. 2003).

Sustainable agriculture also contains the issues of food safety, and GM production in agriculture, both of which the NFU has strong opinions on. A safe and reliable food system, according to the NFU, is dependent on the family farm system. The system in Canada today, one that is heavily dependant on agribusiness, exports, and most worryingly, imports, does not lend itself to a strong sense of security. The NFU stridently argues that the government needs to look closely at both policies and reevaluate its priorities. Both of these issues are also closely linked to the growth of agribusiness power through free trade.

Another important facet of NFU policy is how the issue of orderly marketing systems in Canada is framed. The federal government's weakening of the marketing system currently in place has provided the NFU with a political opportunity to demand a change in the system to one based on three general concepts (Qualman, 2002). The first is the control of products through the marketing system in order to meet market demand. The second is a system of single desk selling, and the third component is the equality of delivery opportunity between producers. Added to this are the concepts of pooling returns and costs among producers as well as eliminating manipulation and speculation of the markets along with waste. The NFU believes fervently that an orderly marketing system for farm products is a necessary part of an overall policy that will protect the family farm system and ensure it remains the basis for food production in Canada. As NFU member, Bruce Hunter argues:

The very best way to [challenge market concentration] ... is for farmers to create a partnership with the end users of their products. This can be accomplished in a number of ways but should be based on some form of cooperative model. The popularity of community based agriculture projects is a prime example of how this can be accomplished. ... My own personal experience has led me to believe that the best way to bring agriculture back into some kind of balance between producer and consumer is through direct marketing. By reducing or entirely eliminating all financial transactions with corporate agriculture I can avoid being conscripted into its army of exploited minions (Hunter interview, Mar. 2003).

Proof exists that supply management is indeed a helpful tool in maintaining small farms. As appendix 4.5 illustrates, farmers in sectors that are supply-managed (dairy and poultry and eggs) have been able to maintain more adequate on-farm net incomes than those of farmers in the non-supply managed cattle, hog, or grains and oilseeds sectors. Outside of the supply-managed sectors, only farmers whose primary products were potatoes³⁵ earned reasonable net incomes (NFU, Sept. 2002a). The supply managed system is not perfect however. There are flaws in the design which the NFU and its members recognize. According to Bruce Hunter:

The basic flaw in the present supply management system is that quota or the licence to produce has been allowed to acquire capital value. The price of quota has escalated to such proportions that it is beyond the reach of most small and medium sized family farms and is monopolized by mega farms many of whom have direct ties with agribusinesses. The price of milk quota is now approximately 4000.00 dollars per cow. The NFU must insist that a revised method of quota ownership and quota transfer be implemented so as to allow beginning farmers the opportunity enter the industry. Failure to address this problem will only lead to a further concentration of agricultural production in the hands of the privileged few (Hunter interview, Mar. 2003).

Even with the flawed nature of the supply management system, the NFU continues to

³⁵ It should be noted that an important part of the strength of the potato sector (especially in PEI) is due largely to the strength of the NFU in that province, and the successes it has had provincially in protecting the rights of the small farmers through legislation passed by the provincial government over such issues as crop rotation cycles.

maintain that it is better than no system at all. This sentiment is proven when one looks at the American system in which farmers receive an even lower price for their goods in certain sectors than Canadian farmers. The NFU does not want that kind of 'free and open' system in Canada.

Orderly marketing board systems have their critics, and not only among the agribusinesses and organizations, but also among some farmers as well. This, according to Peter Dowling is because:

Farmers don't recognize the [need] either. They often want to be independent and compete on their own terms, but there has never been more need than there is now for marketing boards and government assistance and so on that can put some order into the market and get farmers some power in the market place. As this goes on [the dismantling of the system] you have most of the hog marketing boards across Canada no longer single desk operations, and all kinds of attacks on the CWB, and Milk Boards ... and it all comes down to how much we will be able to supply and [how to] command the best price you can. The best way to do that is to have control of the supply and once you give that up under trade rules you can't get it back, so even though circumstances or desires change farmers can't get together and get it back under the current structure. ... An example in Canada is the Canadian Wheat Board, one of the advantages it has is being able to meet more specific demands of buyers and therefore command a premium price for farmers. ... That is something that the American system can't do with its buck wheat. ... [T]here are some opponents to the CWB, they are very vocal and that is how we know about them, but they are not representative of the majority of farmers judging by the various measures that have been available the last few years. Whenever there is an election or plebiscite or anything its always been a majority of farmers who come down in favour of the CWB (Dowling interview, Feb. 2003).

As designed by the NFU, an orderly marketing system would also include other supports and programs. Most importantly, in order for these programs to be effective they must respond on the basis of need, have a capped ceiling, and factor in the production costs that farmers are facing. Set up in such a manner, support programs would work as a

viable alternative to government programs such as NISA, which, the NFU argues, fails to provide a comprehensive national safety net system for family farms (NFU, Sept. 2002b).

At the end of March 2003, the federal government will be introducing the APF, which has already been discussed in a previous chapter. The main concerns that the NFU has with the new APF are mainly that there are no new funds offered, and that in many cases the funds being discussed are just being reallocated from other programs where they have already been proven to be woefully inadequate. The organization is further worried that the new program will 'lock' in this inadequate level of support for years to come (NFU, Dec. 2002; NFU, Jan. 2003; Ross Weatherhead, 2003). Darrin Qualman points out that by committing no new cash, and maintaining the policy of 'disaster relief' the government is failing to make a commitment to slow the destruction of the family farm system. By focussing on individual crises, the government is missing the issue at the very heart of the loss of family farms. Qualman frames the farm crisis as structural creation that has become a permanent fixture in Canadian agriculture. This fact will not change until the structures that are causing the crisis are altered. The government, argues Qualman, needs to look at the causes of the farm crisis, instead of just throwing greater, or less, amounts of money at the system (Qualman personal communication, Mar. 2003).

The introduction of the APF has helped to further define the agriculture policy of the Canadian government. This in turn has opened several new arenas for mobilization among farmers. The NFU is hoping to take advantage of the growing tide of discontent among farmers who see the APF as a continuation of policies that have failed in the past. From the NFU's perspective, this lack of a constructive response by the government

toward the crisis is helping to frame the grievances of farmers from diverse settings, and is also providing a new mobilizing structure for the NFU.

The policies of the NFU promotes a framing process that links farmers to a different form of agriculture than the one accepted as the model for production today. The NFU has chosen to frame farm grievances in direct opposition to the interests of transnational agribusinesses, which the NFU has identified as the root of the structures which have imbedded the farm crisis in Canadian policy and society. This is a fight that farmers have been fighting for generations, the power and concentration of the companies has become more intense in the past few decades and this has heightened the crisis and radicalised much of the NFU's discourse. In actuality, however, farmers have been mobilizing against corporate dominance and the allowance of monopolies by the government for over a hundred years.

Recommendations for Institutional Change

The NFU, while creating a radical discourse, continues to make recommendations to all levels of government and to try and act within the system to change the system (it will be interesting to see if the increasingly remote nature of the government will further enhance the radical discourse of the NFU and lead it to radically challenge the very foundations of Canadian state in the future). Some of what the organization has put forth includes: creating policies that will ensure that farmers are able to recover their cost of production through both good and bad years; provide the ability of farmers to manage their supplies and production without interference from outside corporations; ensure governmental control over the market power and profiteering of transnational

agribusiness; prevent agribusiness corporations from gaining control of farming interests and land; and prevent TNCs from entering the production of agriculture through any means (NFU, Jan 2003).

For the NFU, the first, and most important action, would be for the federal government to shift its focus from export markets back to domestic food production. Included in this policy shift, is the necessity for agriculture to be taken off of the WTO agenda and left to the domain of domestic policy and farmers. The takeover of Canada's economy by international corporations must also be halted, and reversed, while markets that have been de-regulated should be re-regulated for the benefit of both farmers and consumers. Finally, Canada should also work with other nations to create an alternative food production and distribution agreement. This would ensure that people not only have access and the means to produce their own food, but also that food producers are provided a fair return on their work and wealth created in rural communities is returned to the communities and not removed to urban centres or other nations. As well, agricultural policies and practices must be altered so that they act to protect and enhance the natural environment, and finally that the international food trade regime is subservient to all the aforementioned goals.

Future of the NFU

Part of the framing process for any movement or organization is to create a common sense of optimism. In many ways, this is the most difficult part of mobilizing activists in a sustained act of resistance. For members of the NFU, the future of the organization is tightly linked with the future of the family farm. As such, there is both

great hope and optimism tied to a strong sense of insecurity. The best description of the future is perhaps made by Ann Clark, a professor at the University of Guelph, and a member of the NFU: "I prefer to visualize the future I want, and then work towards it. Otherwise, [it is] too depressing" (Clark, 2003). For many, the beginning of the end was when the battle over the FTA was lost in 1989. The NAFTA did not really change the system, it just increased the power of the TNCs and decreased the power of government. The real damage (according to Alan Slater) was done when the door was opened with the FTA. The time to start planning against the consequences of free trade, if that is the way people wanted to act, was when the agreement was being negotiated.

As for the success of the organization, both past and future, response among the NFU is a bit more varied. The problem of too few members is a reality for the NFU, and a growing one for many farm organizations as the number of farms continues to dwindle. The accreditation of the NFU-O will help increase membership numbers in Ontario, but it still begs the question: how does one go about fighting free trade? Alan Slater remembers the way it was once done, before FTA, but believes it is a way which no longer works. Using \$100,000 pieces of diesel fuel burning machinery to protest the financial crisis of farmers is a public relations disaster which creates the opposite perception of farmers than what the protests are aiming at. So, really all Slater is sure of is how it can no longer be done. "When we wanted a milk board we drove tractors to Toronto and blocked the roads for quite awhile, and got our message heard. That wont work anymore. I don't know what works now. We need new ideas, my old thinking won't get things done anymore" (Slater, 2003).

For many members of the NFU, the way forward from this point is to broaden the base of support through transnational mobilization, and through greater linkages with civil society. The NFU must become more than just a farmer's interest group. It needs to be an organization that can challenge society while building supports that cut across different parts of civil society. As a national organization, the NFU has done this, creating links with many organizations, including the Council of Canadians, while taking a stand on healthcare, and currently with the joint campaign against GM wheat.

Ann Clark expresses a sense of optimism, arguing that the track record of the NFU, in conjunction with other NGOs, has been impressive. Working with other organizations, they managed to deny Monsanto's rBGH (bovine growth hormone in milk) in 1999. rBGH is a genetically engineered drug that increases the milk production capacity in dairy cattle. The effects of the drug are controversial, Monsanto argues that there are few side affects, while others (including Health Canada scientists) believe that it poses real dangers to both the animals and to humans consuming the milk products.

The fight against the use of rBGH was a campaign the began in 1989 and lasted 10 years, though it really began to pick up speed in 1994. Working in concert with the CoC, Sierra Club, Toronto Food Policy, and the Canadian Health Coalition, the NFU managed to pressure the federal government to ban the use of rBGH in dairy products sold in Canada (CoC, 1998; CoC, 1999). The rBGH campaign is perhaps the best example of the NFU's successful use of new opportunity structures that the globalization process has caused that now allow the organization to work on issues that do not only affect small farmers. By framing the issues in a broad context of health, freedom to

choose, and consumer rights, while aligning itself with other civil society movements like environmental groups and the CoC, the NFU launched a successful campaign against Monsanto. As NFU-O coordinator Peter Dowling argues:

Most people figure there is nothing we can do, but we have sometimes been successful, like with something like Bovine Growth Hormone. We prevented it from Canada. The way we won that one was to get thousands of people upset about it, and we linked with CoC and they did the same thing and positions were taken and published. We also worked with Health Canada scientists and got rBGH into the Senate committee. We found experts and scientists that had concerns and were articulate in expressing them. It took some very tenacious people, but we did it (Dowling, interview, Feb. 2003).

Ann Clark believes that the NFU is one of the few organizations working (in concert with others such as the Sierra Club, or Greenpeace, etc.) who will be able to make a difference.

For the NFU, support for wider mobilization should not be hard to find, as those affected by the changing agricultural policies are not just farmers, but anyone who eats food. Peter Dowling argues that it is these people, in the guise of consumers that need to become involved:

I think that people who eat food need to take charge. ... [I was] at a meeting and only a handful of farmers showed up, but there were a 180 people there because someone was wanting to put up a huge hog barn in their community, so I was explaining to them what globalization meant and was about. People shouldn't be surprised that 15 years after we signed the FTA that we are getting large corporate agriculture into our communities. And the time to start planning against that if that is the way you are going to go was when the agreement was being negotiated. The way people might to it now is to discontinue the same kind of eating habits they had in the past and start to ask questions about their food and demand the kind of agriculture and productions systems that they support. Either acting by themselves or through community activities, maybe turning to 'slow food,' stuff with less processing. People need to begin to support local food systems and we need to maintain our marketing systems and people with political power need to make sure that they make it their concerns as well (Dowling interview, Feb.

2003)³⁶.

The fight against globalization and free trade for the creation of safe agriculture all comes back in the end to the citizens. As a society, everyone feeds into the system. It must be the citizens, rural and urban alike who make the changes and demands that will ensure sustainable small family farms. However, as Don Mills wonders:

[Are] people willing to support good locally grown food, or good locally made clothes, well that seems pretty obvious, the answer is in almost every case is no. Given the option I will buy my Nike running shoes that are made in Asia. I think that if everyone broke from that perspective, and approached it from the belief that I am going to try and buy as much as I can locally, and trade what is left over, we would be a lot better off (Mills, interview Feb. 2003).

The challenge for the NFU now, is how to get people interested in the issues that it represents (and which it argues effects everyone in society). So far, the organization has not been as successful as it wishes. Somehow, through education or demonstrations, a sense of the immediate needs to be created, because as Don Mills points out, people are not likely to come out and protest if they feel they are comfortable in their lives. The question for the NFU, is how can a sense of comfortable apathy be broken? People in Canada do not want for much, and it is very easy to become complacent in such a situation. Mills is not sure how to take such a message forward, it is hard to say if anyone does.

³⁶While growth in organic farming is increasing, and there has been a move towards a greater number of direct marketing initiatives (where farmers go to markets and sell what the produce directly to the consumer), the numbers are still relatively small, and often cost-prohibitive (for both farmers and consumers). What the NFU is pushing for is greater funding from the government for such initiatives as farmers switching to organic production, this in turn may make such products more widely available, at which point consumers may become more willing to make the choice between the different form of produce. All of this will take a massive education campaign as well.

What the NFU philosophy is adamant about, however, is that food is different. It is not like a shirt, or electronic gadget, food is framed as something basic, that every person needs to survive. It should not be traded or lumped in with manufactured goods, and that is what free trade is doing. Transnational agribusinesses have placed agriculture into the 'free market' under the label of manufactured goods, but food is not a manufactured product, though it is becoming more so with GMOs.

What particularly worries NFU members such as Mills and Slater, is that by turning food and other agricultural products into commodities, the food system that has been relatively successful in past is being fundamentally weakened. The small farm food system has successfully weathered many storms up until now, and the real worry is that this last one may prove to be just too much. This worries Mills, who sees the need for a food system that is not only resilient to weather and insects, but is also able to respond to changing cultural and economic factors. For this, what is needed is a system that is diverse, and what, Mills demands, is more diverse than a system of small independent farmers? Everything is done just a little bit differently, and everyone uses slightly different genetics. Some farmers do better under certain circumstances than others, but this in itself ensures the survival of the system.

Conclusion

The direction that agriculture is moving in today, pushed by the actions of transnational agribusinesses and allowed by complacent governments, will culminate in the destruction of the family farm system. "The system taking its place is one that is highly centralized, capitalized and far more industrialized. Not only is the family farm

more viable and sustainable, it is absolutely necessary in the long run” (Briarpatch, 1995: 1).

The current industrial agriculture system has been facilitated by the disembedding of the liberal compromise and the growth of free trade. It is through the opportunity structures created by the changing political nature of the domestic and international systems, as well as the growing family farm crisis, that the NFU’s radical discourse has emerged. While the organization has deep roots in Canadian agrarian activism reaching back at least one hundred years, its discourse has become more radical in the past decades. Like many of the movements which came before it, the NFU has preferred to work within the state institutions in order to effect change. For a large part of its history (as well as the history of many of those in the past), this approach has led to a conciliatory manner of mobilizing and a greater awareness of, and obedience to, the state authority. However, with the change in systems in the late 1970s to a more global market and the continued disembedding of liberalism and the weakening of the state’s role in domestic economics, opportunity and mobilizing structures have been created which demand a more radical approach to resistance. Added to this, the state’s growing reluctance and inability to receive the NFU’s message through legitimate channels has forced the organization to step back from the legitimate institutions and use a more radical discourse to successfully have its message heard.

Globalization has also facilitated the growth of opportunity structures on a transnational level. The growing role of intergovernmental bodies in policy decision making has led to the rise of transnational social movement organizations. In turn, by

taking part in actions that cross borders, the NFU and its members have been exposed to a plethora of different cultures and beliefs, which is often reflected in their current framing processes, and the mobilizing structures which they utilize.

Through this increasingly radical discourse, the NFU is agitating for fundamental changes to the economic system, the role of the state, and the form of accepted agriculture in Canada and globally. It has begun to call for the end of free trade and a reduction in the power of transnational corporations. While trade agreements are indeed needed, there must be a recognition that these treaties need to benefit all parties involved, and not just corporate interests. Domestic policies are being addressed through a trade perspective, discussions centre around what is best grown for exports, instead of questioning how a nation might best supply food security for its own people. The 'structural adjustment' towards trade and exports does not just happen in the global South either, it is very much a cornerstone of Canada's agricultural policy. This sort of thinking is antithetical to creating a system of food security for nations, and one that is doomed to failure. (Mills 2003)

Since the mid 1980s, the NFU has taken advantage of political opportunity structures that have arisen due to the upheavals caused by the disembedding of liberalism and the dismantling of the Welfare state. Using social movement theories, particularly those of political policy and opportunity structures, it is clear that the actions of the NFU have been shaped by several factors most importantly the open or closed nature of the political system, the stability of elite alignments, as well as the presence of elite allies, and the state's capacity for repression. Further, the NFU has also been able to take

advantage of the new structures of political opportunities, preexisting organizations and resources (often in alliance with other organizations such as the ACN and CoC), and has made full use of the sense of solidarity among the many groups fighting economic globalization and free trade, in order to mobilize activists domestically, regionally, and internationally. It is within an environment of conflict over the very survival of the way of life family farmers that the NFU has offered up, in allegiance with other civil society movements, a radical alternative to the current global economic and political system.

Conclusion

The National Farmers Union in Canada has radicalised the farm movement under its guidance and is mobilizing for a fundamental restructuring of the agriculture system in Canada and the world. The 'new' system that the NFU believes will better support the global civil society (rural and urban alike) is one based on the sustainable production of food by small and medium sized family farmers.

This study is an investigation into how one particular social movement, the NFU, is taking advantage of arising political opportunity structures in Canadian and international politics in order to strengthen its ability to mobilize activists on issues important to its mandate. The changing system of agriculture from one protected by embedded liberalism to the current liberal economic free market expressed in trade agreements such as the WTO, FTA, NAFTA, and the proposed FTAA, have transformed the political system domestically and created new opportunities for the NFU, in which to act, articulate new grievances as well as old, and form alliances with a growing number of like minded organizations.

The agricultural system, as it is structured today, is one that is increasingly liberalized, and is deeply symbolic of the need to legitimize the economic integration of the entire world. The historic identification of agriculture to place and nation, had, until the past few decades, helped to insulate the sector from the growing global free market system which developed in other sectors of production such as manufacturing and some services. The increasing liberalization and integration of world markets has not only affected state structures, but also reinforced sets of power relations on a global scale. In

the case of agriculture, it has institutionalised the power and relations of the transnational agribusinesses in connection with state apparatus and farmers.

The liberalizing of economies, as represented through free trade agreements such as the NAFTA and WTO, serves to reinforce the interests of corporations and the more industrialized nations. The regulatory agencies set up through these trade agreements further entrench the power of agribusinesses at the expense of farmers across the world, which in turn acts to de-stabilize rural communities and further compromise the ability for domestic food security. The continued marginalisation of small and medium size family farming in both the North and South, the continued degradation of land and the wider environment, and the imbalanced use of land, all clearly threaten the security of rural producers, their communities, and vulnerable urban consumers alike.

For the NFU, free trade is not only a cause for the misery of the Canadian farmer, but also farmers around the world. It is an unnecessary and destructive part of transnational agribusinesses's agenda for wealth and power. While exports and export markets are important, they are modest compared to the production and the total size of the Canadian domestic market. As such, the NFU believes that the Canadian government must place primary focus on the continued health of agriculture in Canada and the domestic processing and retailing industries. Exports should never become more important than the ability of a nation to produce a sufficient and safe amount of food in order to provide domestic food security to all its citizens. As exports become the means by which success in the agriculture sector is judged, this necessitates the increase in imports of Canadian goods in the place of domestic food security in other nations, and

may also lead to 'dumping' practices. This, in turn, fosters a global food system wherein only those people with money and market power can obtain sufficient amounts of food to survive and be healthy.

The flood of cheap food exported from one nation into another is forcing farmers off the land and into the cities (a form of structural adjustment that is taking place in the North as well as in the South) and the farmers that manage to hold onto their land are forced to switch from domestic food production to cash crops for export in order to survive. This simultaneously exacerbates domestic food insecurity and international oversupply, which lowers the price of food produced by farmers and thus the cycle begins anew (Murphy, 2002).

The winners in this system of liberalized and industrialized agriculture, are not farmers, nor consumers, but corporations. The increasing market power and size of agribusinesses, such as Cargill, ADM, ConAgra and Phillip Morris, are the most important contributing factors to the weakening of the family farm system the world over. The agri-food production chain is characterized by huge imbalances in market power between the small farm-producers and the transnational agribusiness firms. Considering the size of these agribusinesses, it is hard to conceive of any situation in which the numerous and relatively small family farms could manage to extract a fair and adequate share of the revenues from farm production. This problem is exacerbated by the ever decreasing number of firms that dominate each sector of the production chain. The small number of very large corporations results in their ability to exert greater upward pressure on their selling prices, and greater downward pressure on their buying prices than would

be the case in a truly competitive and free market. This extreme concentration of market power enables these firms to extract extremely high profits at the expense of small farmers world-wide.

The crisis in agriculture is not only limited to Canada. As has been mentioned above, free trade and a monopolistic market are having a destructive impact on Southern farmers as well. What is more, farmers in nations such as the United States and Great Britain are also facing the same disastrous consequences as Canadian farmers.

The situation of farmers in the global South is often far more dire than for those in Canada or the United States. The livelihoods of many farmers in the South are focussed on survival. Subsistence farming has become redundant in the global liberal economy, where one must produce a profit to be considered viable. Thus, free trade has serious consequences for the many farmers in the South who are subsistence, or marginally above subsistence, in their levels of production. These farmers do not produce enough to provide for the demand of the transnational exporter, and nor can they compete with the cheap imports which the same transnational literally dumps into the local market. This is taking place throughout the world.

One example is Mexico, where the Zapatista uprising brought to prominence the plight of the peasant farmer due to free trade and globalization. The effects of free trade on small-scale Mexican farmers has been dramatic. In 1994, the Mexican government instituted changes in the land system in order to be NAFTA compliant. One change was to the land redistribution program established in the Mexican Constitution at the time of the Mexican Revolution. To meet the NAFTA's foreign investor protection requirements,

the Mexican government could no longer protect small farmers from losing their land due to bad debt. Changes such as these have resulted in literally millions of Mexican peasant farmers being forced to leave their farms and migrate, either to the cities or further north to work as migrant labour in the US and Canada (Public Citizen, 2001).

The projections for the number of small farmers displaced in Mexico due to NAFTA's agricultural provisions range up to 15 million. While more conservative estimates put the number of displaced Mexican farmers at a much lower 1,750,000 people displaced, this is still a huge number for cities in Mexico to absorb, and has led subsequently to an increase in poverty, malnutrition, and school desertion (when the men are forced to leave the area and seek occasional labour elsewhere children are often pulled from school to assist with the increased workload left for the women in the family). While the Mexican administration in 2002 trumpeted the 'success' of the six billion plus pesos in agro-export earnings, farmers and peasants in Mexico point out that these earnings went mostly into the pockets of transnational firms (non of which are Mexican) with fewer than 7% of Mexico's farmers seeing any of the increased revenue.

One of the largest contributing factors to the plummeting income of the Mexican farmers (and many others in throughout the global South) is the 'dumping' by the United States (among others). Dumping occurs, when one country subsidises the production of a crop and then exports it at below cost of production, which undermines unsubsidized (or less subsidized) production in the importing nation. For example, due to the American farm bills (which will be discussed below), in 2001 corn cost an average of \$3.41 a bushel to produce in the US, but sold on the international market for \$2.28 a bushel. Food

First, a California-based policy institute, reported that California rice which cost between \$700 and \$800 an acre to produce but received \$650 an acre on the world market and that US wheat was being exported at 46% below cost (Carlsen, 2003).

What does this mean for farmers in nations affected by dumping? Dumping erodes producer prices. For example, the value of Mexican maize dropped 64% between 1985 (when Mexico signed the GATT) and 1999. Dumping also leaves the importing nation's producers without a market, both domestically and internationally. The United Nations Development Program estimates that worldwide US farm subsidies cost nations in the South about \$50 billion USD a year in lost agricultural exports. This, turns attention to American subsidies and the perception of the American agriculture sector which they create. It is sometimes assumed that farmers in the US are being well protected from the vagaries of the free market and are thus doing extremely well (Carlsen, 2003).

The situation in the United States is, in fact, a fascinating case study of how high farm subsidies are often crafted and directed in a manner that fails to protect the family farmer almost entirely. The latest farm subsidy bill, passed in 2002 totalled \$248.6 Billion USD (much of which is in direct contravention of the WTO and NAFTA agreements). Yet, the number of farmers in the US is declining at similar rates to Canada. US farm activists argue that the farm bills which are supposed to provide financial support to farmers, in fact are designed to ensure that the market demands the lowest possible prices for farms products (Christison, 2000). This has been dramatized by the need for over \$6 billion USD in emergency disaster payments a year, since the previous

farm bill was passed in 1996. Similar to the outcome of the smaller farm support programs in Canada, in the US the top 10% of farm-subsidy recipients collect two-thirds of the money, while the bottom 80% receive just one-sixth. Almost half of the commodity payments go to large farms with average household incomes of \$135,000 USD. Moreover, many of the crops produced are not even eligible for subsidy payments. For example, in California, only 9 percent of the 74,000 farms have actually received subsidy payments since 1996, thus providing an astronomical \$1.8 billion USD to fewer than 3,500 farms in the state (Mittal, 2002).

American farmers also face the problem of competing against an ever fewer number of concentrated agri-businesses (that many began as American companies provides little comfort). Farmers also face the same issue of falling prices and less returns in the face of increasing input costs, all the while witnessing the consistent increase in the price that firms such as Phillip Morris place on the 'value-added' consumers goods in the grocery stores. This situation is perhaps more intense in the US, where farmers may receive far more money in aid but the lack of any form of marketing boards (such as the Dairy and Wheat which exist in Canada) has allowed agri-firms to gain control of an even greater proportion of the farm sector.

So, it is hardly a surprise that many American farmers have similar complaints to those of their Canadian counterparts. While expressing frustration at the global perception that farming in the US is a stable and well protected industry, farmers in the US continue to fight the same 'war of position' as members of the NFU in Canada. They argue, for example, that money could be better spent on the structural problems

underlying the crisis is instead thrown at each individual disaster. Little attention is paid to the causes, or the linkages between each crisis, and the result is that American farmers (like those in Canada) are forced to limp from crisis to crisis begging for money in order to survive. The lack of support for a sustainable farm system is in turn radicalising those farm groups who are being threatened with extinction.

The growing liberalization of agriculture in the global economy is linked to many different important issues, not all of which could be covered in this paper. Of the many issues that deserve further discussion, perhaps the most important is the international aspect of resistance to free trade in agriculture. While this paper touched on the Via Campesina movement, and offered the short discussion of Mexico and the US above, the wider topic deserves a greater in depth discussion than it received. The international aspect is an important factor as it leads into the very important and timely issue of food security. With the WTO renegotiating the AoA as this paper is written, and the growing debate over achieving global food security gaining volume, the role of globally linked farmer, peasant, and consumer groups should become ever more important.

The other important topic that should be researched further, are the alternatives to the industrialized form of agriculture that is being created by liberal economic system through such agreements as the WTO 's AoA and the NAFTA. The main alternative is the sustainable small, diverse farms that have existed for centuries. Organic farm systems, which are based on the family farm, are an area that also deserves more research. Organic farming is gaining popularity throughout the industrialized North, as consumers begin to demand safer food that can be guaranteed non-GM. Perhaps the basic distinction

that needs to be further explored between farming systems is the fundamental difference between extensive and intensive agriculture.

The agribusiness system is not really intensive, but more of an extensive form of agriculture. It functions by building big, but not necessarily intensive, operations. Intensive operations are those witnessed in traditional agriculture in countries such as Kenya. There, a plot of land successfully feeds eight children, two goats, and also produces extra for market (highly dependent on natural forces of course). It is a misnomer to call the mega-hog barns in Ontario or Manitoba intensive, they are actually extensive, since they do not really increase food production overall. That is how the system should be viewed, and the question that must be asked is, how can we get the most food out without putting more energy in? The extensive system of agriculture is highly energy consumptive, both in the terms of the fossil fuel burning on the farms but also in the manufacturing of fertilisers, in the transportation of food over an average 3,000 kilometres to reach the grocery store (Mills interview, Feb. 2003).

The GMO debate is another vitally important area that was beyond the scope of this paper. As companies such as Monsanto and Novartis continue to struggle to find a market for their product, the fight against, or for, GMOs will become increasingly intense. GMOs are antithetical to the conception of small, sustainable, and natural farming that organizations such as the NFU and Via Campesina promote.

Firms such as Monsanto, through their policies and actions, are perhaps the most easily identifiable corporations in the agribusiness. Unlike firms such as Cargill, who spread their influence in a subtle and insidious manner that is not easily noticed by wider

civil society, Monsanto's policy of expansion is often one of open aggression. The corporation has an apparent total disregard for corporate social responsibility, (Monsanto has openly stated in the past that the task of to ensure the safety of biotechnology is not part of its mandate, but is a task that should lie under the purview of government health and safety administrations). Added to this, the corporation has managed to gain the enmity of many farmers by its drive to prosecute any farmer who replants GM seeds produced by Monsanto.

This quest by the corporation to maintain its profit share and prevent farmers from controlling the seeds used in farming is perhaps best demonstrated through the experience of one Canadian farmer, Percy Schmeiser. Perhaps the most well-known Monsanto lawsuit in Canada, the outcome of *Schmeiser vs. Monsanto* has repercussions that will affect all farmers as the use of GM seeds grows. Percy Schmeiser is a farmer in Alberta, who was unfortunate in that the canola seed he had been developing over 40 years of farming, cross-pollinated with a neighbour's RR Canola, and sprouted the next year. For this, Monsanto successfully sued Schmeiser for patent infringement and illegal use of its GM seed (winning the settlement of Schmeiser's entire profits for that year's crop). While the ruling itself was a frightening precedent in Canada with regards to the rights of transnationals in relation to farmers' control over their seeds. What is truly disturbing, and in the opinion of this paper, a failure of the legal system in understanding the farm process, was the specific points on which the federal judge ruled.

The judge ruled that the manner in which the RR Canola made its way into Schmeiser's own crop was immaterial. It did not matter if the seed or pollen from the

GM crop blew in by the wind, was cross-pollinated by floods, birds, bees, or migrated from the field of a neighbour. Even if the cross-pollination took place against the will of the farmer in question, the patent was still being infringed upon. Further, and more worryingly, the judge ruled that if a field *is* cross-pollinated with Monsanto's GM RR Canola, then the plants become property of the corporation (Acres USA, 2002). This is a fundamental error in judgement, that speaks to the power of corporations over farmers in a situation where the rights should unquestionably lie with the small producer.

The issue of GM products is an area that needs further study and understanding, so far there has been little opportunity for public participation in the setting of GM policy and regulations. The controversy over GMOs can successfully provide links between rural and urban activists, links desperately needed in the movements against globalization and the free market. However, the GMO issue is also extremely important because it is the next watershed in corporate control over agriculture and farmers. Rulings such as the one concerning Percy Schmeiser, handed down by the Canadian federal court, serves only to reinforce the growing urgency in the battle to prevent the loss, not only of small farmers, but of everything that a sustainable and bio-diverse food system represents, not least of which is the ability for world food security and national food sovereignty.

The continued loss of small farms is justified by the global elites as nothing more than the competitive weeding out of the producers who are not efficient enough to survive. Further, the loss is of no great consequence in the 'new' knowledge based economy. These free market ideologues do not take into account the values that are associated with rural life and communities which are being lost, and the extreme

distancing between consumers and the land that supports them by agri-business. They also lack fundamental understanding of the importance of domestic food security and production in a time of accelerating global market change, as well as economic downturns. Finally those that believe that a 'new economy' has replaced the old, seem to fail to recognize that it is the fully functioning 'old' economy that feeds and supplies resources to the 'new' industries.

In the words of French farm activist José Bové (perhaps most famous for driving a tractor into his local McDonald's restaurant):

Why refuse something which is presented as "progress?" It's not because of old fashionedness [sic], or regret for the "good old days." it's because of concern for the future, and because of a will to have a say in the future development. I am not opposed to fundamental research. ... On the other hand, I don't think that every application of research is necessarily desirable, at the human, social, or environmental level. ... Either we accept intensive production and the huge reduction in the number of farmers in the sole interests of the World Market, or we create a farmer's agriculture for the benefit of everyone. Genetically modified maize is ... the symbol of a system of agriculture and a type of society which I refuse to accept. Genetically modified maize is purely the product of technology, where the means become the end. Political choices are swept aside by the power of money. ... Agriculture production has now become the agro-industry. From the farmers who formed their small cooperatives, we have seen a conversion to the firms who have rationalized their systems of production in order to maximize profits on their investments (Bové speech, 1998).

Appendix 2.1

Change in the number of farms in Canada; both overall and by receipt class.

As can be seen, while the number of small scale farms continues to decline, there has been a substantial growth of large scale farms in Canada, a trend that is continuing.

Canada	1995	2000	1995 to 2000
	Farms Reporting		
	Number		% Change
All Farms	276,548	246,923	-10.7
Gross receipts class:			
Less than \$10,000	71,175	54,166	-23.9
\$10,000 to \$49,999	85,608	76,284	-10.9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	42,587	35,255	-17.2
\$100,000 to \$249,999	51,221	47,079	-8.1
\$250,000 to \$499,999	17,579	21,396	21.7
\$500,000 and over	8,378	12,743	52.1

Source: Canada, Statistics Canada (May 15, 2002).

Appendix 2.2

Prominent issues in the UFO Organization

The main elements of critique that the UFO and its members put forward (the rank-and-file were heavily involved in formulating UFO policies, as movement leaders instead that a vital part of the movement was for all the clubs to study and discuss the issues in the nation, so that everyone could participate in the 'clean-up' of the country) can be reduced to seven main points:

Urbanization: concerned mainly the loss of not only rural land, but also rural workers to the cities in order to fill the factories.

Conscription: as mentioned above was an extremely important issue for many farmers, who were resolutely against it.

Tariffs: as has also been mentioned above, detrimentally raised production costs for farmers, and lowered incomes

'Big Interests': these included most of the major corporations of the day, and the issues were the same; monopolies destroying the purchasing and selling power of small farmers.

The Press: The mainstream press was seen to be undemocratic and corrupt, serving only the needs of the Big Interests, and their lapdog, the old parties.

The Old Parties: According to the UFO the two established parties offered nothing new or different and neither provided the farmer voter a viable alternative come election day.

Prohibition: prohibition, or at the very least, regulation of 'intoxicants' was a concern of many farmers.

Source: Badgley (2000).

Appendix 2.3

Excerpts from the CCA's Farmers Platform, adopted in Winnipeg, 1917.

The organized farmers have for years in their annual conventions and local meetings been passing resolutions demanding relief from the oppressive burdens imposed on the agricultural industry by legislation enacted in the interest of privileged classes. Representation has been regularly made to the government at Ottawa demanding redress, but up to the present time a comparatively small measure of relief has been secured. On the contrary, the burdensome legislation farmers have complained of has not only been maintained but recent years made more oppressive.

It is becoming more apparent each year that our parliament is becoming more and more under the direct influence of industrial, financial and transportation interests represented by men of wealth in financial and industrial centres and if the rural population and the common people, including industrial wage earners are to have their view point represented in parliament, a democratic system of nominating and electing representatives must be adopted.

The history of dealing with economics in Canada for the last quarter of a century is an outstanding illustration of how far those responsible for the commercial legislation of the nation may wander away from that which is in the best interest of the country. However fertile the soil of the country may be and however frugal and industrial its people, it will remain poor and backward and the people will be lacking in the highest comforts in life if its trade laws and its fiscal policy are unsound. The abandoned and used fertile fields of the western prairies and the decadence of agriculture of the rich province of Ontario abundantly testify to the truth of this natural law.

The Council is composed of the executive officers of the United Farmers of Alberta, the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company, The Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, The Manitoba Grain Growers Association, The Grain Growers Grain Company, The Grain Growers Guide, The United Farmers of Ontario and The United Farmers Co-operative Company of Ontario (together) representing 65,000 farmers.

Source: Canadian Council of Agriculture (1917).

Appendix 2.4

Excerpts from the CCF programme, adopted at the First National Convention, Regina 1933.

The CCF is a federation of organizations whose purpose is the establishment in Canada of a Co-operative Commonwealth in which the principle regulating production, distribution and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits.

We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based upon economic equality will be possible.

We consider that both the old parties in Canada are the instruments of capitalist interests and cannot serve as agents of social reconstruction, and that whatever the superficial difference between them they are bound to carry on government in accordance with the dictates of the big business interests who finance them.

[The CCF] is a democratic movement, a federation of farmer, labour and socialist organizations, financed by its own members and seeking to achieve its end solely by constitutional methods.

Agriculture

Security of tenure for the farmers upon his farm on conditions to be laid down by individual provinces; insurance against unavoidable crop failure; removal of the tariff burden from the operations of agriculture; encouragement of producers' and consumers' co-operatives; the restoration and maintenance of an equitable relationship between prices of agricultural products and those of other commodities and services; and improving the efficiency of export trade in farm products.

We Propose therefore:

- 1) The improvement of the position of the farmer by the increase of purchasing power made possible by the social control of the financial system.
- 2) Whilst the family farm is the accepted basis for agricultural production in Canada the position of the farmer may be much improved by:
 - a) The extension of consumers' co-operatives for the purchase of farm supplies and domestic requirements; and
 - b) The extension of co-operative institutions for the processing and marketing of farm products.
- 3) The adoption of a planned system of agricultural development based upon scientific soil surveys directed towards better land utilization and a scientific policy of agricultural development for the whole of Canada.
- 4) The substitution for the present system of foreign trade, of a system of import and export boards to improve the efficiency of overseas marketing, to control prices, and to integrate the foreign trade policy with the requirements of the national economic plan.

Source: A Source Book Of Canadian History (1959).

Appendix 3.1

Canada - US Free Trade Agreement (1989) Chapter Seven - Agriculture

Article 701: Agricultural Subsidies

1. The Parties agree that their primary goal with respect to agricultural subsidies is to achieve, on a global basis, the elimination of all subsidies which distort agricultural trade, and the Parties agree to work together to achieve this goal, including through multilateral trade negotiations such as the Uruguay Round.
2. Neither Party shall introduce or maintain any export subsidy on any agricultural goods originating in, or shipped from, its territory that are exported directly or indirectly to the territory of the other Party.
3. Neither Party, including any public entity that it establishes or maintains, shall sell agricultural goods for export to the territory of the other Party at a price below the acquisition price of the goods plus any storage, handling or other costs incurred by it with respect to those goods.
4. Each Party shall take into account the export interests of the other Party in the use of any export subsidy on any agricultural good exported to third countries, recognizing that such subsidies may have prejudicial effects on the export interests of the other Party.
5. Canada shall exclude from the transport rates established under the Western Grain Transportation Act agricultural goods originating in Canada and shipped via west coast ports for consumption in the United States of America.

Article 702: Special Provisions for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

1. a) Notwithstanding Article 401, for a period of 20 years from the entry into force of this Agreement, each Party reserves the right to apply a temporary duty on fresh fruits or vegetables originating in the territory of the other Party and imported into its territory, when:
 - i) for each of five consecutive working days the import price of such fruit or vegetable for each such day is below 90 percent of the average monthly import price, for the month in which that day falls, over the preceding five years, excluding the years with the highest and lowest average monthly import price; and
 - ii) the planted acreage in the importing Party for the particular fruit or vegetable is no higher than the average acreage over the preceding five years, excluding the years with the highest and lowest acreage.
- b) The temporary duty referred to in subparagraph (a) may be applied on a

regional or national basis, and the import prices and planted acreage will then be determined on a regional or national basis, as appropriate.

c) For purposes of calculating the planted acreage referred to in subparagraph (a)(ii), any acreage increase attributed directly to a reduction in wine grape planted acreage existing on October 4, 1987 shall be excluded.

2. Any temporary duty applied under this Article together with any other duty in effect for the particular fresh fruit or vegetable shall not exceed the lesser of:

- a) the applicable most-favoured-nation (MFN) rate of duty that was in effect for the particular fresh fruit or vegetable prior to the date of entry into force of this Agreement determined with reference to the same season in which the temporary duty is applied; or
- b) the MFN rate of duty in effect for imports of that particular fresh fruit or vegetable at the time the temporary duty is applied.

3. Any temporary duty shall only be applied either once per twelve-month period per good nationally or once per twelve-month period per good in each region. If a temporary duty is initially applied in one or more regions, any later application in a different region during that twelve-month period shall be based on a later five consecutive working day period under subparagraph 1(a)(i). No temporary duty shall apply to goods in transit at the time the duty is applied.

4. Such a temporary duty shall be removed when, for a period of five consecutive working days, the representative F.O.B point of shipment price in the exporting Party exceeds 90 percent of the average monthly import price referred to in subparagraph 1(a)(i), adjusted to an F.O.B point of shipment price, if necessary, and in any event shall be removed after 180 days.

5. Prior to the application of the temporary duty, the importing Party shall provide to the exporting Party two working days notice and an opportunity to consult during those two working days.

6. No Party may introduce or maintain any action under this Article on a particular good during such time as an action is maintained under Chapter Eleven (Emergency Action) on the same good.

Article 703: Market Access for Agriculture

In order to facilitate trade in agricultural goods, the Parties shall work together to improve access to each other's markets through the elimination or reduction of import barriers.

Article 705: Market Access for Grain and Grain Products

1. Commencing at such time as the level of government support for any of the grains

wheat, oats, or barley in the United States of America becomes equal to or less than the level of government support for that grain in Canada, Canada shall eliminate any import permit requirements for wheat and wheat products, oats and oat products, or barley and barley products, as the case may be, originating in the territory of the United States of America, except that Canada may require that the grain be:

- a) accompanied by an end-use certificate which has been completed by the importer of record declaring that it is imported for consumption in Canada and is consigned directly to a milling, manufacturing, brewing, distilling or other processing facility for consumption at that facility;
- b) denatured if for feed use; or
- c) accompanied by a certificate issued by Agriculture Canada, or its successors, if for seed use.

2. The Canadian Grain Commission, or its successors, shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with subparagraphs 1(a) and (b) and shall freely provide the end-use certificate required in subparagraph 1(a).

3. For purposes of paragraph 1, wheat, oat and barley products shall be defined as processed or manufactured substances which contain alone or in combination more than 25 percent by weight of such grain or grains. Any grain for which import permit requirements have been eliminated in accordance with paragraph 1 shall be excluded from this definition.

4. The method for calculating the level of government support referred to in paragraph 1 is set out in Annex 705.4.

5. Each Party shall, for purposes of restricting the importation of a grain or of a grain product due to its content of that grain, retain the right, to the extent consistent with other provisions of this Agreement, to introduce or, where they have been eliminated, reintroduce quantitative import restrictions or import fees on imports of such grain or grain products originating in the territory of the other Party if such imports increase significantly as a result of a substantial change in either Party's support programs for that grain. For purposes of this paragraph, grain means wheat, oats, barley, rye, corn, triticale and sorghum.

Article 710: International Obligations

Unless otherwise specifically provided in this Chapter, the Parties retain their rights and obligations with respect to agricultural, food, beverage and certain related goods under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and agreements negotiated under the GATT, including their rights and obligations under GATT Article XI.

Please note that this is not the entire chapter, for a full text of the FTA or chapter 7

please see the Canadian - United States Free Trade Agreement

Source: Canadian - United States Free Trade Agreement (1989).

Appendix 3.2

FTAA MINISTERIAL'S DECLARATION CONCERNING AGRICULTURE AT QUITO, NOVEMBER, 2001

We ratify the importance of agriculture for the economies of the region, the integral and non-discriminatory treatment of which in the FTAA negotiations will contribute to generating employment, reducing poverty and fostering social stability.

We reaffirm the hemispheric commitment to the elimination of export subsidies affecting trade in agricultural products in the Hemisphere and to the development of disciplines to be adopted for the treatment of all the other practices that distort trade in agricultural products, including those which have an equivalent effect to agricultural export subsidies, and to make substantive progress in the market access negotiations.

We recognize that, in a global market, we must have significant results in the negotiations on agriculture, both in the FTAA and in the WTO. In this context, we must also take into account the practices by third countries that distort world trade in agricultural products.

We also recognize that our respective evaluation by country or group of countries, of the results in the market access negotiations in agriculture in the FTAA will depend on the progress we can reach in other subjects that are part of the agriculture agenda. In order that the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) can achieve its objective of ensuring balanced progress and the timely conclusion of the negotiations, we instruct the Negotiating Group on Agriculture (NGAG) to intensify its work with the view to presenting to the TNC, before its fourteenth meeting, a report on the progress achieved in all the subjects under consideration by the NGAG.

Source: Free Trade Area of the Americas (November, 2002a)

Appendix 3.3

Canadian Agrifood Exports and Total Net Farm Income: 1989-2001

Source: Canada, Statistics Canada (2002d) Table 002-0009; Canada, DFAIT (January 13, 2002).

Appendix 3.4

Changes in Farm Finance: 1988-2002

According to the NFU, between 1988 and 2002 the following changes have taken place in farm finance - none of which speak of a growth in the farm family income or prosperity. The following figures have not been adjusted for inflation.

	1988	2002
Agri-food Exports	\$10.9 Billion	\$28.2 Billion
Realized Net Farm Income¹	\$2.9 Billion	\$4.1 Billion
Farm Debt	\$22.5 Billion	\$44.2 Billion
Wheat: Farm-gate Price	\$4.93/Bushel	\$4.48/Bushel
Employment in Agri-food Processing	277,300 Jobs	274,900 Jobs
Fertilizer Price (anhydrous ammonia)	\$374/Tonnes	\$539/Tonnes
Federal Government Spending on Farm Support²	\$4.7 Billion	\$3.5 Billion
Number of Farms in Canada³	293,089	246,923

1. If inflation is taken into account, net farm income has actually decreased by 24%.

2. Adjusted for inflation, spending is at its 6th lowest in 18 years, and the new APF provides no plans for increased spending over the next few years.

3. Since the signing of CUSFTA there has been a 16% decrease in the number of farmers. Since 1996 Canada has lost 11% of its family farms.

Source: NFU, August 2002.

Appendix 3.5

Canadian Agri-Food Trade (\$ billion CDN)

	2000	2001	2002-Dec.
Total Agri-Food Exports:	23.41	26.64	25.75
Total Agri-Food Imports:	17.46	19.23	20.69
Trade Balance:	5.95	7.41	5.04

Canadian Top 5 Agri-Food Exports (\$ billion CDN)

	2000	2001	2002-Dec.
Total Agri-Food Exports:	23.41	26.64	25.75
Wheat, non durum	2.89	3.04	2.06
Slaughter cattle	1.13	1.65	1.81
Beef, boneless, fresh	1.17	1.46	1.51
Canola	1.15	1.28	0.97
Wheat, durum	0.81	0.90	1.03

Canadian Top 5 Agri-Food Imports (\$ billion CDN)

	2000	2001	2002 -Dec.
Total Agri-Food Imports:	17.46	19.23	20.69
Grape wines	0.73	0.80	0.85
Food preparations	0.55	0.56	0.64
Bread and biscuits	0.37	0.42	0.48
Corn	0.19	0.41	0.60
Beef, boneless, frozen	0.29	0.38	0.39

Source: Canada, AAFC (June 19, 2002); Gervais (February 26, 2003a);
Gervais (February 26, 2003b).

Appendix 3.6

Government Expenditures in Support 1990-2001

Note: the 2001 figures are estimates.

Source: Canada, AAFC, March 2002; Canada, AAFC, February 1998.

Appendix 4.1

Commodity Chain for Cargill Incorporated.

Depicts the depth of both vertical and horizontal integration of the company on an international scale. Please note that the examples are not necessarily inclusive.

Appendix 4.2

A Brief History of NFU Activities - 1969-2000

1969

- 2000 people attend the founding convention in Winnipeg.
- NFU get agreement from longshoremen to load grain during Vancouver port strike.
- Essex and Kent farmers withhold property taxes protesting education funding from farmland. Their activities led to 25% rebate on tax, and later a 50% rebate.

1970

- 2000 farmers march on Alberta legislature to gain recognition; 7500 march in Regina; and 2800 march in a Winnipeg parade to CWB offices demonstrating support for orderly marketing.
- 200 farmers at the Alberta legislature give away 2000 dozen eggs protesting distress prices.
- 1600 Ontario farmers picket Borden's. They protest imported milk powder, threaten nation-wide boycott, and get agreement that milk imports will stop.
- Peace River farmers picket elevators and withhold fescue protesting near give-away prices. 16 months of withholding fescue (1971) results in stronger prices to producers.
- NFU denounces basic philosophy of the Task Force Report on Agriculture on grounds that it proposed two-third reduction in number of family farmers.

1971

- At the request of Prime Minister Trudeau, NFU Board meets with Federal Cabinet Committee to discuss legislation affecting farming.
- NFU opposes Bill C-176 (Natural Farm Products Marketing Act) as proposed; also Bill C-244 (Prairie Grain Income Stabilization Act). Both Bills later withdrawn.
- NFU president Roy Atkinson arrested during tractor blockade protesting PEI government's refusal to meet with NFU to discuss proposals for tax-free farm fuel, low-interest loans, and legislation to stop corporate encroachment into farming.
- In an effort to gain the right to bargain collectively for milk prices, a boycott of Kraft is initiated in Ontario after Kraft refused to meet. The boycott is supported by labour and urban groups.
- 3500 western farmers demonstrate in 3 prairie capitals with hog cavalcades to focus attention on low hog prices. Farmers, many women, conduct information picketing at supermarkets.

1972

- NFU sponsors joint western provincial meetings on feed grains and urges provinces to integrate feed grain marketing under the CWB.
- NFU presents land use briefs to governments of PEI and Sask.

- NFU Task Force on grains policy holds 40 hearings, receives 350 submissions.
- Submissions made in Maritime provinces on potato marketing and stability. Vote in PEI showed 64% of potato producers favourable to NFU potato marketing plan.
- NFU president questions use of DES as a livestock growth stimulant, resulting in a ban.
- Manitoba members expose evidence of price fixing by fertilizer manufacturers.

1973

- Brief presented to Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council criticized contracting practices of processing companies, and market dominance by Safeway (whose expansion was later limited by Alberta Courts).
- Removal of domestic feed grain pricing from CWB regulation vigorously opposed. NFU warns of far-reaching consequences.
- NFU counters move by railways to end statutory Crow rates.
- Proposal for certified collective bargaining rights taken to all governments where NFU is organized. PEI enacts legislation enabling producers to vote on NFU proposed marketing plan. Producers turn down plan by small margin.

1974

- Further undermining of orderly marketing of feed grains strongly opposed. Sask. plebiscite of more than 40,000 farmers show that 93% want feed grains under CWB; similar results found in Manitoba.
- In a meeting with the Canadian Dairy Commission, NFU proposes that level of subsidy payments be indexed to cost of production.
- Alberta members pressure provincial government for aid to farmers with unharvested crops resulting in \$26 million in assistance.
- 2000 farmers march on legislature in Edmonton to protest meat packers lockout.
- Operation "Country Mouse" - occupation of federal agriculture buildings in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton to dramatize beef producers' income crisis.

1975

- 1000 farmers converge on Parliament Hill to protest plight of dairy producers, greeted by metal barricades and massive security.
- NFU meets with committee of MPs and federal cabinet headed by Prime Minister Trudeau.
- Region 8 (Alberta and B.C. Peace River area) farmers express public concern over potential flooding of farm land by proposed damming by B.C. Hydro.
- 200 demonstrate on Syncrude highway (demonstrations escalate to over 20 highway locations) culminate in mass meeting of 1000 who decide to pitch tents on Alberta legislative grounds to focus public attention on beef producers' crisis.

1976

- Six fertilizer manufacturing companies charged under Combines Investigation Branch in an action that stemmed from the 1972 activities of Local 523.
- 300 New Brunswick farmers protest government inaction over potato growers' grievances by demonstrating on Trans-Canada Highway at Grand Falls, giving away 5000 10-lb. bags of potatoes to focus public attention.
- 150 Peace River area farmers trek to Victoria to meet provincial government on the question of farm collective bargaining rights.
- Massive phone-lobby of MPs on cattle price crisis.

1977

- NFU successfully opposes proposal for check-off on grain sales to fund research; demands plebiscite on feed grains marketing promised by Otto Lang; protests arbitrary increase in maximum tariff charges by Canadian Grain Commission.
- Major Hall Commission recommendations endorsed by NFU. Six weeks later, federal government forms PRAC, contrary to Hall recommendations. NFU critical.
- NFU pickets transportation meeting called by Otto Lang in Saskatoon.

1978

- NFU protests "switching" - CWB announces to end practice in October.
- NFU opposes beef check-off in Manitoba.
- NFU protests depressed potato prices by blockading Trans-Canada Highway at Grand Falls, N.B. PEI members demonstrate solidarity.
- Operation Sky Spy exposes railways' claims to boxcar shortage. Railways commit to repair 2000 boxcars.
- NFU protests depressed potato prices by blocking Trans-Canada Highway at Grand Falls New Brunswick. P.E.I. members demonstrate solidarity.
- 150 members lobby Manitoba government on land policy, Matrimonial Property and beef check-off.
- Region 6 members conduct informational picket at official opening of Cargill Elevator at Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

1979

- NFU president Jim Mayne debates federal Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan on plant breeders' rights legislation.
- NFU initiates class action against CP and CN railways to recover damages resulting from lost grain sales.
- NFU members in Region 3 donate over 3 tons of food to striking miners and their families at INCO in Sudbury.

1980

- NFU brings together 300 members and representatives of railway and grain handling

unions in Saskatoon. The conference adopts a policy advocating retention of the Crow and an end to railway centralization.

- NFU takes a strong stand against the concept of negotiable quotas for industrial milk in its presentation to the Canadian Dairy Commission.
- Plant Breeders' Rights legislation introduced in the House of Commons. Opposition to the bill from the NFU and other organizations helped prevent passage of the legislation, and it died on the order paper.
- NFU organizes leadership skills workshop for women in Saskatoon. The seminar explores women's contribution to the farm economy, the role of women in the NFU and the challenges facing NFU women.

1981

- Approx. 200 farmers participate in the "Crow Train" to Ottawa. Western farmers were joined by colleges from Ontario and the Maritimes in lobbying politicians to retain the Crow rate. NFU members in four western provinces organize corresponding provincial lobbies.
- Federal Court of Appeal dismisses NFU's Class Action against CP and CN. NFU officials point out that the threat of a class action did stimulate the railways into making a greater effort to move grain.
- Federal government agrees to pay \$81 million compensation to farmers for losses suffered during the grain embargo of the Soviet Union. In 1980, the NFU had strongly opposed the U.S. sponsored embargo.
- NFU documents degree of corporate concentration in New Brunswick economy; calls for supply management for potatoes.
- NFU establishes working committee to study effects of agricultural chemicals.
- NFU initiates "Employment Practices of Farm Women" study to document the contribution of farm families to farm operations.
- 1800 farmers and supporters attend a massive "Keep the Crow" rally in Regina. Statements of support for the NFU position are heard from a variety of organizations.
- NFU members join 80,000 people in a CLC-sponsored Ottawa rally to protest the federal government's high interest rate policy.

1982

- PEI farmers score victory as the provincial government recommends limits be placed on corporate ownership of farmland.
- Federal Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin outlines government plans to abolish the Crow rate in Winnipeg, February 8. NFU members demonstrate in massive rally in Delisle, Sask. on February 23. Approximately 1300 farmers showed up to condemn the minister's plan. Pepin responded by telling farmers they "were not entitled to be upset".
- NFU lobbies politicians in Ottawa for orderly marketing of red meats.
- 350 farmers protest appearance of federal Transport Minister Pepin in Regina, July 15.

Pepin attempts to convince journalists that a "consensus" exists among western farmers to abolish the Crow rate.

- 600 farmers protest abolition of Saskatchewan Land Bank program in Regina.

1983

- NFU members in N.B. donate over 22 tons of potatoes to unemployed workers in the Mirimachi district.
- Transport Minister Pepin outlines federal strategy for killing the Crow. NFU organizes massive protest rallies in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, and Edmonton. NFU President Wayne Easter calls for a common front to oppose changes to the Crow rate.
- NFU urges passage of Bill C-653, the Farmers' and Creditors' Arrangement Act, designed to aid financially strapped farmers.
- NFU undertakes massive phone-in lobby in May as federal Transport Minister Pepin introduces Bill C-155, legislation to abolishing the Crow rate.
- NFU officials, along with members of the Farm Survival Association, meet with the federal government over need to implement C-653.
- House of Commons Transport Committee begins hearings on Bill C-155 across Canada. NFU members make presentations at every hearing.
- NFU members in Ontario urge provincial and federal governments to implement an orderly marketing system for red meats.
- NFU Farm Financial Crisis Committee established to aid farmers facing financial distress.

1984

- NFU takes the CTC to court over the freight rate increase.
- NFU members participate in farm gate defence action in Virden, Manitoba.
- Ontario NFU members present briefs to provincial hearings outlining the need for "basic changes in the marketing system for red meats".
- NFU initiates massive educational campaign around issue of imitation dairy products.
- NFU members in New Brunswick help organize shipments of potatoes to farmers in Nicaragua.
- CN Rail and Cargill Grain Company try to introduce variable rates in grain movement. The NFU rallies opposition to the move, and the CN later withdraws its application.
- A farm gate defence action at the MacPhail farm outside Charlottetown during the NFU convention pays off. The efforts of the NFU members from across the country helped keep the family on their land.

1985

- NFU members present brief to New Brunswick government detailing problems and solutions in the farm economy. NFU calls for establishment of a Canadian Potato Commission and National Meat Authority.

- “Agriculture: A Realistic Opportunity,” detailing family farm transfers, is the priority project of the NFU youth.
- NFU presents brief to P.E.I.’s government opposing Cavandish Farm’s application to purchase additional farmland. The government rejects Cavandish’s application and instructs the company to divest itself of land over the established limit of 3000 acres.
- NFU presents brief to the B.C. government detailing the farm finance crisis, the extent of foreign ownership of the Peace River country and the need for soil conservation measures.
- NFU reps. attend the founding convention of the Canadian Auto Workers.
- NFU presents brief to the Special Joint Committee on Canada’s international relations opposing ‘free trade’ with the US, pointing out that such a plan would undermine essential orderly marketing systems.
- PEI members join striking dairy workers at Perfection Foods on picket lines.
- NFU members participate in mass drought relief rally at Regina legislature. NFU youth president Kim Korven is a featured speaker.

1986

- To draw attention to the continuing farm crisis, NFU members across the country occupied several FCC offices.
- NFU members staged a demonstration in support of deficiency payments at Prime Minister Mulroney’s Saskatoon reception on July 3rd.
- The government announced on October 3 that \$1 billion would be made available to cover grain income shortfall of Canadian farmers.
- In March, the NFU was represented at a large Anti-Free Trade rally held in Massey Hall, Toronto. President Wayne Easter addressed the crowd.
- The NFU submission to the Canadian Dairy Commission warned that the Free Trade Agreement would be detrimental to Canada’s dairy industry.
- Ontario members picketed Maple Leaf Mills in Windsor to protest imports of cheap U.S. corn.
- The NFU youth complete a manual on the steps for a successful transfer of a farm from generation to generation.

1987

- NFU Vice-President Art Macklin holds two sets of country-wide hearings to meet with Farm Crisis Committees to discuss issues and strategies.
- In Saskatchewan, members engage in sit-ins at provincial land-bank office to protest cancellations of crown land lease agreements.
- About 4000 farmers from Quebec and Ontario, along with thousands of trade unionists, rally in Ottawa to protest free trade and acid rain. Wayne Easter addressed the crowd.
- NFU members demonstrated against free trade at the Prime Minister’s visit to North Battleford and Swan River.

- NFU Women complete women's resource handbook: "Weaving New Ways."

1988

- NFU very active in FTA debate;
- Canada's two-tier price wheat system ended July 31. On January 2, an estimated 4000 Canadians blocked the Ambassador Bridge linking Windsor and Detroit. NFU members brought numerous tractors to the demonstration. February 18, Wayne Easter was featured at a large Pro-Canada Network Rally held in Regina.
- June 18, NFU officials participated in a tractor parade protest against the FTA held in Brainerd, Minnesota, where it was clear that U.S. farmers were as leery of this deal as their Canadian counterparts.
- NFU members in Region 3 provided leadership to the GROW coalition to block federal legislation for Plant Breeders' Rights. Bill C-107 died on the order paper.
- NFU Local 611, under the leadership of NFU Women's Vice-President, Nettie Wiebe, launched one of the country's first rural childcare co-operatives under the new federal childcare policy.
- PEI members were involved in a campaign for potato marketing. Following a plebiscite on a plan that had not been discussed by producers, NFU members were successful in having an injunction imposed.

1989

- NFU members actively participated in CWB District meetings. 22 meetings pass resolutions calling for the reinstatement of oats under the CWB.
- NFU members endorsed and supported the campaign of Rural Dignity, pressing for an end to closures of rural post offices.
- Anti-Privatization Rally takes place at the Saskatchewan legislature. NFU members with Saskatchewan Federation of Labour representatives and others comprise 5000 who wanted to voice against Devine's privatization and layoffs.
- NFU protested the GATT ruling on ice cream and yogurt to the Federal Ag. Minister.
- An NFU effort in Ontario succeeded in gaining a public inquiry into the unauthorized release of BST-treated milk for public consumption by the Ontario Milk Marketing Board.
- Survey results on prairie farmland foreclosures were released indicating foreclosures on 1.5 million acres.

1990

- After fighting for ten years, the House of Commons passed Plant Breeders' Rights legislation. The NFU, along with the Christian Farm Crisis Committee, organized a special lobby effort upon the Saskatchewan MLAs.
- NFU opposes the end of interest-free cash advances. After pressure, the federal government agrees to reinstate them for one year.

- The NFU pushes to get canola under the CWB.
- NFU fights check-offs on farm products in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and B.C.
- NFU President Wayne Easter attends a counter NAFTA Conference in Mexico City, organized in part by the Pro-Canada Network.

1991

- NFU condemns the US/UN attack on Iraq, as sanctions were beginning to show results.
- 800 farmers converge on Regina to protest GRIP and call for government financial assistance.
- NFU officials call for Canadian negotiators to "walk away from the table" at the GATT talks to protest the loss of Article XI and supply management.
- NFU members in PEI expose a scam by the provincial milk marketing board to transfer quotas illegally to a few large producers at the expense of smaller producers.
- 800 farmers rally at Manitoba legislature to call for emergency assistance.
- President Wayne Easter travels to Geneva and Brussels to press Canadian farmers' demands for preservation and enhancement of Article XI of the GATT.

1992

- Over 40,000 farmers from across Canada converge on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest the federal government's apparent willingness to sacrifice supply management at the GATT negotiations.
- NFU women undertake a "farm women's radio project" to broadcast rural women's perspective on major issues.
- NFU members in Fort St. John, B.C. help organize a large rally calling for decent prices for their products and the strengthening of orderly marketing systems.

1993

- NFU women participate in a rural childcare conference in Quebec City.
- 13,000 farmers converge in Saskatoon voicing three demands: 1) an immediate "Third line of defence payment"; 2) a strengthened Canadian Wheat Board; and 3) no change in the method of payment of the Crow benefit. NFU President Art Macklin gives thundering speech to the crowd.
- Region 8 members meet with Bill Barlee, B.C. Agriculture Minister, on the drought.
- NFU holds forum on PVYn in Charlottetown, bringing in experts from Ontario and England, the US and PEI to discuss the political and scientific aspects of PVYn.
- NFU members in PEI stage a successful demonstration at provincial and federal agriculture ministers' meetings. The rallies focussed on the attack of orderly marketing.
- NFU stages border demonstrations at Emerson, Man., Regway and North Portal, Sask., and Coutts, Alta. With U.S. farm groups, they protest the 'continental barley market'.
- Members in Ontario help organize anti-GATT rallies in Renfrew and Essex counties; NFU members lobby the federal government protesting the loss of Article XI.

- NFU Women's President, Nettie Wiebe, joins anti-GATT demonstrations in Europe, speaks to French farmers concerned with GATT agreement implications.
- NFU Youth President, Chris Tait, participates in Canada-Mexico Labour Exchange.
- NFU helps found the Via Campesina ("Peasant Way" or "Peasant Road"), a world-wide movement that unites landless peasants, small and medium-sized farmers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities. The Via Campesina is a federation of over 69 organizations in approximately 37 countries.

1994

- A class action suit is launched by PEI potato producers against the federal government, focussing on the mishandling of the PVYn crisis by Agriculture Canada.
- NFU women meet with other farm women's groups in Ottawa, and develop an agreement on the need to push for rural childcare.
- Vice President Carol Masse and Women's President Karen Fyfe lobby, along with other NFU members in Ottawa on rBGH, rural childcare, and farm financial crisis.
- Region 3 NFU members push Ontario Milk Marketing Board to take a strong stand against rBGH and push for the continuation of supply management.
- Manitoba NFU members involved in the fight for environmental regulations and sustainable forestry practices for Louisiana Pacific.
- Region 3 organizes a lobby around rBGH; gets many non-farmers involved.
- NFU organizes a rally in support of the CWB in Regina.

1995

- Nettie Wiebe first woman elected to head major farm organization in Canada.
- NFU members campaign in Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee elections. CWB-supporters win eleven out of twelve positions.
- NFU Youth President Karen Pedersen attends NGO forum at the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

1996

- NFU members attend most of the Western Grain Marketing Panel "town hall" meetings. They call for votes at these meetings: vote results are all decisively in favour of maintaining and strengthening the CWB.
- NFU organized rallies in Regina, Swift Current, Shaunavon, Assiniboia, and Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan and Grande Prairie, Alberta decry the recommendations contained in the Western Grain Marketing Panel report.
- NFU is part of a coalition which organizes rallies in Edmonton, Alberta (150 attend), Oak Bluff, Manitoba (900), and Rosetown, Saskatchewan (1,700) on Wednesday, August 14. NFU Vice-President Chris Tait addresses rally in Oak Bluff.
- NFU officials attends Rome World Food Summit as part of official Canadian delegation.

- NFU works as a member of the Producer Rail Car Coalition to attempt to ensure that government hopper cars are sold to producers.
- Ag. Minister Goodale attends NFU National Convention in Saskatoon.

1997

- Members and officials appear before the H of C Ag. Committee hearings on Bill C-72 (amendments to *CWB Act*). They also make presentations at cross-Canada hearings.
- P.E.I. members protest in front of the legislature in Charlottetown.
- NFU works hard in the “Barley Vote”; pro-CWB forces win the vote: 63% to 37%.
- NFU provides support in the CWB’s “level of service” complaint against CN and CP.
- NFU President testifies in Barley Charter Challenge. CWB and farmers win.
- NFU becomes one of the first organizations to ring the alarm bell about hog mega-barns in western Canada. NFU vigorously opposes the Sask. government’s unilateral termination of single-desk hog marketing.
- NFU takes a lead role in opposing the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). President Nettie Wiebe addresses 500 in Saskatoon rally against the MAI.

1998

- NFU delegation attends Int’l Conference on Women in Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
- NFU plays major role in elections for the CWB Board of Directors. Eight of the ten directors elected are strong CWB-supporters.
- NFU appears before H of C Ag. Committee to detail causes of farm income crisis.
- The NFU publishes the “GAPS report” on its website. That report by Health Canada scientists revealed “procedural and data gaps” in the approval process for Monsanto’s genetically engineered bovine growth hormone, rBGH.

1999

- NFU works with Council of Canadians, Grain Services Union, and others to hold rural-urban forums focussed on saving elevators, branchlines, communities, and farms. 250 attend Saskatoon meeting.
- Approximately 300 NFU members and other farmers rallied in Prince Albert outside of the Annual Ministers of Agriculture meeting.
- NFU Celebrates 30 years of farm activism and organization.
- After a 10-year struggle, the NFU wins and the federal government agrees to keep Monsanto’s genetically engineered dairy hormone, rBGH, out of Canadian milk.
- NFU withdraws from Kroeger Grain Transportation Consultations citing “railways’ success in blocking discussions on creating real, effective competition.”
- NFU members oppose Alberta Bill 209, a Bill to create an Alberta wheat and barley board. The Bill was defeated.
- Nearly a dozen NFU officials and members attend WTO meetings in Seattle, Washington and participate in mass demonstrations. The NFU contingent marched

beside farmers from Mexico, Central America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the U.S.A.

- Hundreds of NFU members across Canada participate in Operation Alexander: a phone lobby of federal MPs.
- Pres. Cory Ollikka leads NFU contingent to Toronto's "Family Farm Tribute" concert.
- Vice-President Fred Tait and other NFU officials work with organizations in Manitoba to found HogWatch Manitoba.

2000

- Women's President Shannon Storey represents the NFU in a Farm Women's Leadership Coalition meeting with federal ministers Andy Mitchell and Lyle Vancilief.
- NFU plays major role in second set of CWB elections: Eight of the ten elected directors are strong CWB-supporters.
- NFU officials participate in Farm Credit Corporation consultations and strongly recommends that FCC maintain its farm focus.
- NFU wins two-year struggle to retain a strong Canadian Grain Commission working on farmers' behalf. Unopposed, the CGC's Program and Governance Reviews would have transformed the CGC from an industry regulator to an industry "service provider."
- The NFU releases influential report: "The Farm Crisis, EU subsidies, and Agri-Business Market Power." Officials present brief to Parliamentary committees and UN delegates in Geneva.
- NFU Convention passes a forward-looking policy on GM food calling for a "...moratorium on the production, importation, distribution, and sale of GM food..."
- N.B. NFU officials and members take a lead role in forcing that province's government to backtrack on deep cuts to its agricultural budget.
- NFU members attend the Third International Conference of the Via Campesina in Bangalore, India.
- Alberta NFU opposes huge hog barn proposed by Taiwan Sugar Corporation.

Source: NFU, April 2001

Appendix 4.3

Proposals of Vía Campesina for Sustainable, Farmer Based Agricultural Production August, 2002

A: That the governments and other international bodies undertake an objective evaluation of industrial, large-scale food production compared to family farm production based on local resources including criteria such as: production output, stability of production, adverse effects on the environment, risks involved for the producer, employment, quality of the product involved, affects on the food security of vulnerable populations. That all governments implements policies which limit the adverse effects of industrial production and effectively support, family farm based sustainable farming practises.

B: That governments make the sustainable use of natural resources their highest priority to be realised through support for a family farm based low (external) input agriculture. That governments make long-term investments of public resources in the development of socially and ecologically appropriate rural infrastructure. That governments establish and support decentralized rural credit systems that prioritize the production of food for domestic consumption to ensure food sovereignty. Production capacity rather than land should be used as security to guarantee credit. The privatisation of water resources has to be stopped. That governments and international bodies act to stop the privatisation of natural resources necessary for food production to prevent and reverse the corporate ownership and control of these resources. That the patenting of life forms be forbidden as well as the use of technologies that produce sterile seeds (GURTS (Genetic Use Restriction Technologies) like the "terminator technology). Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) should be banned from agricultural production. Farmers should maintain or regain the full right to grow, multiply and sell their own seeds.

C: That governments, financial and trade mechanisms implement policies which promote the trade of good quality food to the nearest consumers, avoiding unnecessary transportation and processing and giving the highest possible degree of transparency to consumers. Product labels should always contain the origin of the product as well as content. That governments and international agencies, including the United Nations and the World Trade Organization recognize that food is a basic human right. Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food as a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.

D: That the international forums develop and commit to policies which respect the right to safe, culturally appropriate food for all people and support the right of countries to

regulate food safety and impose import restrictions on the basis of clearly defined safety and quality requirements as well as on the impact of any imports on sustainable domestic food production practises.

E: Food is a basic human right. This right can only be realized in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed. Food sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. Farmers have the right to produce food in their own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security. The concept of food sovereignty has to be part of the concept of sustainable agriculture.

Farmers should be able, within the context of the agricultural policies to generate their own production models, according to their conditions and possibilities.

Trade policies must be subsumed under the priorities of food sovereignty and sustainability. Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices. This means that export dumping or subsidized export must cease. Peasants and small farmers have the right to produce essential food staples for their countries and to control the marketing of their products. Food prices in domestic and international markets must be regulated and reflect the true costs of sustainably producing that food. This would ensure that peasant and farmer families have adequate incomes. Peasants and small farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision-making on food and rural issues.

F: In international trading agreements governments have to :

- Conduct a world-wide audit on the serious consequences resulting from the inclusion of agriculture in the GATT/WTO agreements and an immediate correction of existing injustices.

- Immediately cancel the obligation within the WTO of accepting the minimum importation of 5% of internal consumption. All compulsory market access clauses must be cancelled.

- Remove all negotiation in the areas of food production and marketing from the WTO and from all regional and bilateral agreements and to create genuine international democratic mechanisms to regulate food trade while respecting food sovereignty in each country.

- Secure food sovereignty in each and every country giving priority to food production for its people, social aspects and the environment.

- Give each country the right to define its own agricultural policies in order to meet internal needs. This includes the right to prohibit imports in order to protect domestic production and to implement Agrarian Reform providing peasants and small to medium-sized producers with access to land.
- Stop all forms of dumping. To protect the production of staple domestic foods.
- Prohibit biopiracy and patents on life (animal, plants, parts of the human body) including the development of sterile varieties through genetic engineering.
- Allow countries the right to establish food quality criteria appropriate to the preference of its people.

G: That truly agrarian reforms are carried out by the governments which will not only distribute the land to the peasants and farmers, but will also provide means, resources and facilities to turn such land productive and additionally offer protection and legality to the land distributed. Sustainable management of natural resources and the preservation of biological diversity can only be undertaken successfully from a sound economic basis with security of tenure. Farmers' access to land needs to be understood as a form of guarantee of their culture, autonomy of community and with the purpose of preserving natural resources for future generations. Land is a good of nature that needs to be used in a sustainable way for the welfare of all, including those yet to come.

Women play a central role in household and community food sovereignty. Hence they have an inherent right to resources for food production, land, credit, capital, technology, education and social services, and equal opportunity to develop and employ their skills.

H: In general agricultural research should be resource orientated and not input orientated. This research should be farmer and consumer driven as opposed to the current industry driven model. It should start from the local production system, trying to improve it respecting the objectives of the people that depend on it.

Agricultural research (by farmers and other bodies) should be decentralised, and financed and supported through governments with public purpose rather than private profit as a motivation. Research to improve environmental sustainability would lead to a de-intensification of current input-intensive agriculture. It must contribute to a strengthening of existing farmer based sustainable production systems. Family farm based organic agriculture is one of the options that needs more support.

I: Develop and improve the skills and exchange of experiences among the different regions of the world, considering the experiences of the Program Peasant to Peasant, which is successfully carried out in Central America and the Caribbean.

- To promote women to attain the leadership to which they are entitled in the struggle for social equality, forming an active part of the economic and social life and contributing with their capability and intelligence to decision making.
- To allow the development of farmers organisations in order to promote economic

relations of equality and social justice, protection of land, food sovereignty, sustainable and equitable agricultural production based on small-scale farming operations.

-New technologies in education should not be imposed on farming communities. The need for their use will emerge from the communities and organisations themselves if they are allowed to strengthen themselves.

Training methods, offering new information or technology, should respect the local knowledge of farmers by supporting and enriching it instead of degrading and denying it.

Source: Via Campesina (August, 2002)

Appendix 4.4

Agriculture Forum Statement - Quebec City, April 19, 2001

Any trade agreement must be based on national sovereignty and must guarantee the food security of the people, because food is a basic and fundamental human right. Food must be safe, accessible, and provide a fair and adequate return to primary producers. Farming, livestock production, fishing, and agro-forestry must be practised in accordance with public policies which protect and respect the rights of the men and women of the land, including farmer, farm workers, and indigenous people. Such policies must also protect and respect their use of natural resources (air, water, soil), conservation of biodiversity, knowledge of genetic resources, the right to land, and respect for collective and communal forms of property.

The agricultural policies put into practice by the governments of the Western Hemisphere must encourage and ensure the existence of indigenous people, family farmers, and other people who labour on the land. These policies must limit the export and import of significant quantities of food which destroy our local economies and put at risk our health and our environment. Consequently, governments should promote organic agriculture and prohibit the use of transgenic products. In addition, given the profound inequalities among our people, we should seek equitable development rather than promoting 'free trade' which is unequal by nature. The governments of the Western Hemisphere must recognize that the current policies of the World Trade Organization and regional trade agreements, such as NAFTA, have served to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few transnational corporations and have deepened the poverty and dependence of our peoples.

We will not tolerate injustice and destruction caused by such policies. Our struggle has a long history, and we are determined.

Source: The Union Farmer Quarterly (Spring 2001)

Appendix 4.5

**Revenue and Income of Farm Sectors with Marketing Boards as
Opposed to Those Without.**

Dairy	Farm revenues: 259,711 Net cash income: 65,956
Poultry and Egg-	Farm revenues: 531,044 Net cash income: 66,222
Potato-	Farm revenues: 541,316 Net cash income: 85,741
Cattle-	Farm revenues 164,876 Net cash income 11,093
Hog-	Farm revenues 522,587 Net cash income 62,066*
Grain and Oilseed-	Farm revenues: 115,175 Net cash income: 22,597

*larger income in Hog production is due mainly to the increase in 'mega-barns' and does not reflect the difficulty of most small hog producers.

Source: Canada, AAFC (March 2002: 33)

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