

# The Protagonists

Amy Goodman, the famous progressive journalist from Democracy Now in the US, reminds us that if we really want to understand what is going on, we need to listen carefully to people's stories. This unique book collects the stories of some of the National Farmers Union's key struggles over time, told by NFU activists themselves, in their voices. Each chapter focuses on a particular struggle, and by listening to the voices of NFU members, we learn the significance of this struggle, what was at stake and why it matters to the rest of Canadian society. Each of the chapters consists of interviews with two to eight members of the NFU who engage in conversations about key food and agriculture issues and the NFU's strategies and actions, as well as the impact the progressive farm movement has had in efforts to create viable rural communities and socially just and sustainable food systems in Canada.

In this way, the book goes to where the stories are by highlighting the perspectives, analyses and voices of farming people themselves. Let me now introduce you to the key protagonists of the book whose collective experience, activism, knowledge and wisdom are critical to food system transformation.

**Terry Boehm** is an organic and conventional grain farmer and activist in central Saskatchewan. He graduated at the University of Saskatchewan where he studied history and economics. He grows a diverse mix of eight crops on 4,000 acres. He refuses to grow genetically modified crops, partly because of the gene patents that give corporations power over seeds and farmers. He is a former president, vice president, and board member of the NFU. Terry has served on numerous boards, commissions and cooperatives, including a local co-op retail and farm supply store and the former Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. He vigorously resists the intellectual property mechanisms and legislation that prevent farmers and citizens

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from exercising their rights to freely save, reuse, sell and exchange seeds. He has analyzed extensively the negative elements of international trade agreements, fought to save the Canadian Wheat Board and continues to work on railway legislation, saving the Canadian Grain Commission and other issues related to agriculture and social justice. Terry has spoken domestically and internationally and is a frequent witness before Parliamentary Committee hearings (Chapters 3 and 4).

**Maureen Bostock** is a second-generation immigrant who lived on Tsimshian traditional territory in northern BC for twenty-six years, where she came to understand that the fundamental issue facing Canadian society is justice for Indigenous people. When she and her partner Elizabeth moved east and started farming in Balderson, Ontario, she was shocked to learn that the farm was located on unceded Algonquin Territory. With the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, she started Lanark County Neighbours for Truth & Reconciliation with like-minded Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, working to educate people about the impact of colonialism. In 2018, the Perth Healing Forest Memorial was established to commemorate Residential School Survivors and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People. Maureen joined the NFU Indigenous Solidarity Working Group because she believes that farmers need to understand that the land was appropriated if they wish to move forward on a just path (Chapter 12).

**Joan Brady** farms with her family in Dashwood, Ontario where she managed a ninety-sow farrow-to-finish pork operation until 2006. She now operates a seasonal direct-to-consumers market garden specializing in small fruits, vegetables and cut flowers and operates her own consulting business called Sustainable Futures Farm and Food Consulting, which specializes in community and organizational development and business coaching. Joan became involved in farm policy and advocacy as a way to remediate the agriculture sector which had asked for too much from her family. Joan served as the NFU women's vice president and women's president from 2008 to 2014 and has been active on the NFU International Program Committee. Joan is currently serving as a North American Regional Coordinator of La Vía Campesina. Joan is the mother of three and grandmother of three. Her continued efforts to change the world of

food and farming can be attributed to working towards a better future for the next generations (Chapter 9).

**Marie Burge** was born in PEI and is a staff person and member of the Cooper Institute, which was created in 1984. As one of the founders of the Institute, she helped design it as a collective and inclusive organization dedicated to working with other community-based groups engaged in social justice. A lot of that work involves joining and helping to form coalitions. Marie shares with ten coalitions and individual organizations her experience in education, community development and collective action that she gained during her work in the Dominican Republic and PEI. Currently, much of Marie's work focuses on community engagement programs for citizen involvement in changing public policy, especially on basic income guarantee and proportional representation for PEI. With Cooper Institute, Marie is actively committed to the principles of food sovereignty. This is expressed predominantly in defending the family farm model of food production in collaboration with the NFU. She is also active with the Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands and the Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water (Chapters 8 and 11).

**Barbara Campbell** grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, but always had an awareness of farm issues through her grandparents' mixed farm in Milton, Ontario. In 1970, she spent time on a relative's small dairy farm in Markdale, Ontario, where she learned about the dairy industry. Barbara then moved to British Columbia to study plant science and ecology, and during her time as a graduate student she was the coordinator of the Kraft boycott in Vancouver from roughly 1972 to 1974. She later moved to Winnipeg, where Fred Gudmundson, former NFU Director of Organization and Communication, who was working for the Manitoba government in Colleges and Universities Affairs, invited her to coordinate a NFU working group project on post-secondary education for farmers and union workers. Barbara now lives in Saskatoon (Chapter 2).

**Douglas Campbell** is a second-generation dairy farmer and farms with his wife, Kathy, son, Tristan, and nephew, Tyler. Doug has been an active member of the NFU for the past twenty-five years and is a strong advocate for family farms. He is currently the district director of the NFU, Region 1, District 1 (PEI) (Chapter 8).

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**Gordon Carter** was born in PEI and farmed from the age of ten when his father passed away. He bought the family farm in 1969, where he ran a grain and hog operation, as well as a custom farm service operation and snow removal business. With the decline of the hog industry, he got out of hogs in 1995 and then left farming in 2001. As one of the first members of the NFU on PEI, Gordon has held several elected positions in his NFU Local, including president for three years, and he also sat on the district, regional and national NFU boards. His community involvement includes church council member, Boy Scout leader, and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of PEI (Chapter 8).

**Dianne Dowling** and her husband Peter live on Howe Island, east of Kingston, Ontario, at Doublejay Farms, an organic beef operation that they run with their son, Tim. The farm is also home to their daughter Emily's farm business, Root Radical CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Dianne worked as an elementary school teacher for thirty-two years and has been involved in local food and farm organizations in the Kingston area for twenty years. Dianne is a member of the board of the Kingston Area Seed System Initiative and a member of the Food Policy Council of Kingston. Dianne is very involved with her NFU Local, and she has served in several executive positions, including director, vice president and president. In addition, Dianne has been deeply engaged in the struggle to reopen the prison farms: she is on the prison farm advisory panel, continues to be a member of the Save Our Prison Farms organizing committee and is on the board of the Pen Farm Herd Co-op (Chapters 6 and 7).

**Peter Dowling** is involved in the family farm, Doublejay Farms, on Howe Island, Ontario. He and his wife Dianne, switched to organic cropping in the mid-1980s, leading to the organic certification of their farmland in 1994 and their dairy herd in 2001. Their farming enterprises have included sheep, pedigree seed grains, cropping (cereals, forage seed, corn and organic spelt) and the current beef production with their son, Tim. Their daughter Emily's farm, Root Radical CSA is also located on the family farm. Peter was a member of the NFU's National Board for ten years, served as the Region 3 (Ontario) Coordinator and continues to be involved with his NFU Local. With the Local, in the 2000s, Peter played an active role in organizing initiatives in the Kingston area that successfully brought farmers and non-farmers together, including the NFU Feast of

Fields events and the Food Down the Road project. Peter was also active in the Save Our Seeds campaign and the campaign to oppose the introduction of bovine growth hormone in Canada; he also represented the NFU on the Canadian Food Security Policy Group, the Ontario Agricultural Training Institute and the Agricultural Management Institute (Chapter 6).

**Karen Eatwell** operates a small-scale livestock farm with her husband, Peter Duenk, near Denfield, north of London, Ontario. They raise poultry, heritage pigs and Black Angus cattle in a humane manner and engage personally with customers through direct marketing. Karen served as the Region 3 Coordinator (also known as the NFU-Ontario President) from 2014 to 2016, and she is the President of her NFU Local for Middlesex County. Karen is passionate about keeping rural economies strong, protecting the environment when development projects encroach and promoting the important roles that women play in family farming. Her activism is aligned according to these priorities. She assisted in the development of the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council and is currently one of its council members. Karen helped with the development of the council's Strategic Plan, which aims to create a more equitable and ecologically responsible local food system for the region (Chapter 6).

**Julie Enman** is some kind of anarchist, who can typically be found on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Tsimshian peoples (in colonial or settler terms, that's somewhere around Prince Rupert, BC). There, Julie spends time sharing skills as a college carpentry instructor and farmer. When the vegetable growing season is complete, Julie heads to the global south with similar intents. Julie has a great passion for the Canada's North and hearing its voices, playing the fiddle when time allows, and upping the punx (Chapter 12).

**Ayla Fenton** is a first-generation farmer based in the Kingston area. She has worked on organic farms since 2013 and is currently developing a cooperative mixed farm business with other young farmers. In 2014, she attended her first NFU Youth Retreat, and later that year was elected as youth vice president. She has served on the national board and executive of the NFU since then, as Youth President in 2016 and 2017, and then as an NFU-Ontario representative. Her work in the NFU has focused on organizing and advocating for young farmers, and providing political education

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opportunities such as the annual youth retreat. She started attending La Vía Campesina meetings in 2015, and since then has taken on leadership roles within the Vía Campesina's international youth articulation and the North American region. Her current focus within the NFU is to incorporate the methodologies of popular education and resistance she has been exposed to through La Vía Campesina (Chapters 10 and 11).

**Alfred Fyfe** is a fourth-generation farmer, is married and has five children. He joined the NFU back in 1969 and canvassed for members with Wayne Easter in the early days of the NFU. He is the NFU representative to Trade Justice PEI, a coalition of social justice groups working on international trade agreements. In his early farming years, he was a 4-H leader, a school trustee, on the board of stewards of the United Church and has been a member of the New London Lions Club for more than twenty-five years. Alfred was a dairy farmer until 1994 and currently has a small cow-calf beef operation and cash crops of small square bales of hay. He is working with an accountant on the process of turning the business over to the next generation of farmers: his third daughter and her partner (Chapter 8).

**Matt Gehl** was raised on his family's 4,000-acre mixed-grain farm north of Regina, Saskatchewan. His family have been NFU members for decades. Matt was a former NFU Region 6 (Saskatchewan) board member where he toured the province learning from and speaking with farmers at local farm events, writing op-eds for local newspapers and being interviewed on the radio, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Currently, Matt's father and uncle own and operate the family farm. Matt assumes full-time farming during seeding, spraying and harvest season, in addition to his work as a letter carrier with Canada Post. Over the years, Matt has consistently raised concern over issues of land ownership and succession. He was also involved in helping to stop the privatization of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Matt is deeply concerned about the challenges farmers face holding onto the land. Hard work, cooperation and peace are at the root of how Matt lives his life — whether that is carrying the mail or helping on the farm (Chapter 10).

**Cammie Harbottle** runs a four-acre organic market garden in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. Cammie's farm is part of a 100-acre community land trust that she and her partner and friends formed in 2008 based on the philosophy that land is a common good and with the intention of making land more affordable and accessible. Cammie sells over forty types of field and greenhouse vegetables at the farmers' market and in a CSA direct marketing program. Cammie joined the NFU in 2007 and quickly became involved as youth vice president (Dec 2009–2010) and youth president (Dec 2010–2013). Cammie was heavily involved in organizing initial youth retreats and helping to increase the organizational capacity of the youth, following on the work of Kalissa Regier. Cammie's farming journey has been significantly shaped by birthing and raising two children. Farming and mothering are both challenging, demanding and exhausting worlds of work, but Cammie has found them to be exceptionally rewarding and meaningful (Chapter 10).

**Wilfred (Butch) Harder** was born and raised at Lowe Farm in Manitoba; he is a life-long farmer and activist. With his son Dean and his wife Joyce, Butch produces wheat, barley, canola and specialty crops. Butch has been involved in the NFU since its founding in 1969 and has held several elected positions at the local, provincial and national levels. Butch was the former farmer-elected director of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) (1998–2004) and was deeply involved in the fight to save the CWB and to defend farmers' rights to freely use and exchange farm-saved seed. Butch has also been an elected director of the Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA), served as elected director to the Manitoba Pool for twelve years and is a long-time member of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA). In 2013, Butch was awarded the Thirty Year Long Service Certificate by the CSGA, which acknowledged his "forthright manner and his ability to 'call it as he sees it'" (Chapter 4).

**Cathy Holtslander** has been promoting ecology and social justice in agriculture in various organizations since the early 1990s. She is on the Saskatchewan organic farmers' committee that organized a class action suit against Monsanto and Bayer to stop GMO wheat and make them liable for GMO canola contamination. The legal action ended in 2007 without having the issues resolved, however, the committee is still active and Cathy remains involved. She has also served on the board of GRAIN,

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a small, internationally known, activist research non-profit organization that supports small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. As part of community resistance to hog mega-barn operations, she helped found the Beyond Factory Farming Coalition to promote sustainable livestock production. She is currently employed by the NFU as director of research and policy at the national office. She and her partner Lyle Orchard bought a farm in 2008 and farm certified organic grain near Mont Nebo, Saskatchewan (Chapter 3).

**Shannon Jones** is a first-generation farmer in River Hebert, Nova Scotia (in Mi'gmaqi), at Broadfork Farm, which she operates with her partner, Bryan Dyck. Together they grow and sell organic vegetables, cut flowers, herbs and seeds, while working hard to improve soil health and biodiversity. Shannon became involved with the NFU through the 2013 youth retreat and has since served as national women's vice president (2017–2018) and as Region 1 women's advisory (2015–2017). She has worked with the NFU's International Program Committee, Direct Marketing Committee, Seed Sovereignty Committee and the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group. Shannon is also active with other agriculture and food organizations and committees. For example, locally, she is involved with the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN), Agrifutures Nova Scotia and the Cumberland Food Action Network; nationally with the Organic Federation of Canada (OFC), Canadian Organic Growers (COG), the Canadian Organic Standards Technical Committee, and the Organic Value-Chain Roundtable (OVCR); and internationally with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) North America (Chapter 9).

**Don Kossick** grew up in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and began his career as an organizer with the Canadian Union of Students, which was involved in anti-Vietnam war activism and in solidarity-building between workers, farmers and youth. Shortly after the NFU's founding convention in 1969 that he attended, Don began working as an NFU organizer-educator. In that capacity, he helped form NFU locals across Canada, where the emphasis was on organizing, education, research and action. Don was the Kraft boycott national coordinator from 1971–1974. Over the years he has maintained many connections to farm life and to the NFU as an

active associate member. He also has produced several documentaries on the history of the NFU. *Union is Strength — The NFU Story*, was produced for the fortieth anniversary of the National Farmers Union and was co-produced with Steve Wolfson. *Islanders and the Land*, co-produced with Denise Kouri in 2016, examines the historic struggle to keep land in the hands of communities in Prince Edward Island (Chapter 2).

**Wilfred Lacey** is a fourth-generation farmer from PEI who started farming at age fifteen and worked a mixed farm for most of his eighty-one years. He has grown grain, cattle, hogs and strawberries. His farm currently consists of about 150 acres of shorefront, woodland, swamps and cropland. He has two sons who have been given some shorefront property, and one was involved with the NFU as youth director. Wilfred became involved with the NFU at its founding in 1969. He has been local president, chairman of the fruit and vegetable committee and district director. He was a farm representative on the Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food on Prince Edward Island in 2008, and more recently he has been involved with the Tracadie and Area History Project through the Tracadie Good Neighbourly 50 Plus Club (Chapter 8).

**Ken Laing**, along with his wife Martha, has been running the Orchard Hill Farm since 1979. They are now sharing the workload with their daughter and son-in-law, providing organic vegetables and small fruits to over 100 families in the area of Sparta, Ontario. They also provide grain to a local bakery and grow grain and hay for the Suffolk Punch draft horses that power their farm. Given that draft horses are a unique way to reduce fossil-fuel dependency on farms, Ken provides workshops on the handling and care of these horses to help promote these practices. Over the years, he has also helped to mentor aspiring farmers, including through the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO), of which he was one of the founding members, and through the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training Network. Ken participates on NFU committees and has served as president of his NFU Local for Elgin County (Chapter 6).

**Mireille LaPointe** lives in Westport, Ontario, where she teaches native studies at the secondary school level. She is of French and Anishinaabe ancestry from the Aroch Algonquin First Nation. In the mid-1990s, Mireille spearheaded the development of the first native studies program

at St. John High school in Perth, Ontario. In 2007, she became Co-Chief alongside Paula Sherman. In that same year, Mireille was involved with the successful resistance campaign against uranium exploration in Robertsville, one hour from her home. Mireille is convinced that the resistance to uranium mining was possible as a result of cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In the mid 2010s, Mireille was also involved in community organizing to protect Indigenous peoples' rights to plant wild rice (*manoomin*) in Pigeon Lake — what's known as the Wild Rice Wars. Mireille sees the NFU as an important organization that is linking people together for food sovereignty.

**Virginie Lavallée-Picard** and her partner, **Alex Fletcher**, operate Wind Whipped Farm, a certified organic market garden and orchard, in Metchosin, BC. Alex and Virginie also coordinate The Local Food Box Program, a CSA-type marketing partnership bringing together local farmers. Virginie studied and worked in the areas of food system planning and bio-intensive agriculture for fifteen years (Chapter 10).

**Jean Leahy** has lived in the Peace River British Columbia area all her life and was involved in meetings leading up to the founding of the NFU in 1969. She served as the first women's advisory for Region 8 (British Columbia–Peace River Country) and as women's vice president before being elected as women's president from 1975 to 1979. She was the regional coordinator for six years and was elected national vice president in 1990. Jean then became active in provincial politics as a volunteer and candidate, and as a board member for BC Hydro and BC Rail. She has three children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren (Chapter 9).

**Edith Ling** grew up on a family farm in West Covehead, PEI. She worked fourteen years as a private secretary to various ministers of agriculture in the provincial government. She then served for sixteen years as district secretary with the NFU in PEI and is now in the second year of her second ten-year term as women's district director. Edith and her husband, David Ling began farming hogs and cattle conventionally and switched to organic farming in 1985. They direct-marketed their beef at the Charlottetown Farmers Market for sixteen years. Since David's passing in 2013, Edith has continued to live on their farm and has downsized, keeping only a few beef cows. She is active in her church and the local

Women's Institute branch. In 2013 she was recognized with the Women in Agriculture award from the PEI Women's Institute, and she now has three grandchildren (Chapter 8).

**Aric McBay** is an author, community organizer and farmer. Aric farms and operates a CSA with his partner Emily on Howe Island, east of Kingston, Ontario part of the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe peoples. Aric writes and speaks about effective social movements and has organized campaigns around prison justice, Indigenous solidarity, pipelines, unionization and other causes. He is currently the membership development coordinator and special projects manager for NFU Ontario. Aric is also the author of four books, most recently, *Full Spectrum Resistance: How to Build Effective Movements* (Chapter 7).

**Andrew McCann** is a local food activist, living and working with his wife and two children in Kingston, Ontario. Before taking part in the Save Our Prison Farms coalition, Andrew worked with the NFU and Urban Agriculture Kingston on many local food campaigns and contributed to publications with these organizations. Andrew played a leading role organizing the Save Our Prison Farms coalition and was among those arrested on the day of the blockades. Unlike other coalition members involved, Andrew pleaded not guilty and fought the conviction of attempted mischief to property all the way up to the Supreme Court of Canada, along with two other arrestees (Chapter 7).

**Tony McQuail** lives near Lucknow, Ontario, where he and his wife, Fran, have been operating Meeting Place Organic Farm since 1973. They farm with draft horses and combine a mixed livestock operation with an apple orchard, vegetable gardens and more, and in recent years their daughter, Katrina, has been helping to manage the farm. The farm has been such an inspiration to people that it was featured in a 2013 documentary, *Meeting Place Organic Film*. Tony has diverse experiences, including having worked as the executive assistant to the Ontario Minister of Agriculture from 1990 to 1992, and he has also served as the president of the Huron County NFU Local. He and Fran have designed courses for universities, offered holistic management training and consulting services to farmers, and, along with Ken Laing, they were among the founding members of the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO), established in 1979 (Chapter 6).

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**Pat Mooney** is a long-time NFU associate member and has worked in international civil society for five decades, tackling issues related to agribusiness concentration and problematic new technologies from Green Revolution seeds to block chains and the monopoly mechanisms industry employs. He is a co-founder of RAFI (renamed ETC Group) and has received numerous awards for his defence of plant genetic resources and the farmers' right to control their seeds, which led to a UN Treaty in 2004. Pat grew up all over the prairies and farmed for several years with other families near Beresford in southwestern Manitoba. Although Pat has little formal education, he has received two honorary doctoral degrees, first participated in FAO negotiations at age eighteen and has fought for farmers to be heard in global policymaking ever since. Pat is author and co-author of several books on the politics of new technologies and agricultural biodiversity (Chapter 4).

**Karen Pedersen** manages Pedersen Apiaries, her family's small beekeeping operation in North West Saskatchewan. Pedersen Apiaries pioneered wintering bees in single brood chambers and passive solar heating. She started helping out on the farm as a child, joining the payroll at the age of nine. As one of the children playing under the tables (that inspired daycare to be offered as a regular part of NFU meetings), it wasn't surprising that she began speaking out at NFU national convention at the young age of twelve. While her parents, uncles and aunt were running her farm, she worked on a dairy farm in Denmark, a vegetable farm in Grenada and a beekeeping operation in New Zealand. Karen has a BA in Political Studies, was elected as NFU youth president in 1995 and later served as women's president in 2003. She has been active at all levels of the NFU, including representing La Vía Campesina at several international venues. She now focuses on being a mom, managing the farm and teaching democratic processes in the NFU (Chapter 4).

**Jeff Peters** is a vice president of his NFU Local, and since the Save Our Prison Farms coalition has continued to participate in local activism, particularly in defense of farmland and seed saving initiatives in the Kingston area. Throughout the Save Our Prison Farms campaign, he became a key spokesperson for the coalition and has continued to act as chairman of the Pen Farm Herd Co-op. Jeff played a key role in purchasing of the prison farm cattle and organizing the effort to care for the herd

during the period when the prison farms were closed. Jeff also sits on the advisory panel overseeing the reopening of the prison farm at Joyceville and Collins Bay penitentiaries. Jeff and his family operate a beef farm in the Kingston area (Chapter 7).

**Reg Phelan** is a seventh-generation organic farmer and member of Seaspray Organics Cooperative. He grows more than twenty varieties of vegetables, wheat, cattle and blueberries. Reg and his wife, Stella Shephard, live in a 150-year old farmhouse built by his great grandparents. Reg got involved with the NFU in the 1960s, even before it officially emerged as a national organization, when he helped publish the *Broad-Axe*, a community newspaper that focused on the land issue. Reg was a member of the NFU Land Committee for many years. Presently he is the regional representative on the National Executive of the NFU board and is a member of the Cooper Institute, a development education centre in Charlottetown engaged in popular education and research. Reg completed a Masters thesis on the land issues on PEI, entitled “Islanders and the Land” (Chapter 8).

**Carina Phillips and Byron Petrie** are part of Seaspray Organics, a cooperative made up of two family farms, located near Morell, PEI. They grow about one acre of mixed vegetables with another acre in pasture or cover crops. They also have added cut flowers to their crop rotation, and they raise pigs, chickens and sheep. All of their produce is sold directly at farmers’ markets, to restaurants and through a Community Shared Agriculture program. Byron grew up in PEI and Quebec and trained as a welder. Carina also grew up in PEI and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University in 2009. In 2011, they moved back to PEI together and built a small house and homestead, where Carina tries to find a balance between farming and her contemporary art. Both Carina and Byron have been NFU members for seven years. Carina has been a member of the NFU Region 1 Women’s Advisory Committee for two years now, and Byron is the NFU youth district director for PEI, District 1 (Chapter 8).

**Darrin Qualman** is the author of *Civilization Critical: Energy, Food, Nature, and the Future*, a book that details energy and material flows in natural systems and human civilizations. He grew up farming in Saskatchewan and served as executive secretary (executive director) and

director of research for the NFU from 1996 to 2010. He is the author of several influential NFU studies, including “The Farm Crisis and Corporate Power” and “The Farm Crisis and the Cattle Sector.” He assisted in many campaigns while with the NFU: rBGH, GM wheat, the defence of the Wheat Board, and farmers’ rights to save seeds. Darrin has degrees in history, biology and political studies. He has authored or contributed to many journal articles and reports on agriculture and land ownership. Darrin is currently working with the NFU to develop a plan to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture (Chapter 3).

**Kalissa Regier** was born and raised on a grain farm in central Saskatchewan. After several years away at school, at the age of twenty-four, she returned to her family farm, Hestia Organic Farm. For the next ten years, Kalissa farmed with and learned from her parents as they grew organic grains and oilseeds for local and international markets. In 2014, Kalissa moved to southern Saskatchewan to farm with her husband, Tyler Remoué. Their certified organic grain farm incorporates methods such as cover crops, green manure, intercropping, biological controls and conservation tillage to improve soil health and reduce their impact on the land. Kalissa sat on the board of the NFU from 2006–2010 and was a youth representative for Via Campesina North America from 2008–2011. Kalissa served as a member of the coordination committee of the Civil Society Mechanism as well as the Advisory Group for the UN Committee on World Food Security from 2011–2013. She currently serves as a director of the National Farmers Foundation and locally, as a council member for her rural municipality (Chapter 11).

**Jim Robbins** farms near Delisle, Saskatchewan, growing organic grains, oilseeds, pulses and cattle. Jim represented the NFU on a number of grain transportation and farm safety net committees, both nationally and in Saskatchewan. He was elected as the farmer representative on the Senior Grain Transportation Committee and was a director on the Car Allocation Policy Group in the 1990s and later the vice president of the Farmer Railcar Coalition. He represented farmers on the National Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) Committee from 2005 to 2008, having served on the Saskatchewan Farm Support Review Committee for eight years, the Saskatchewan Ad Hoc Programs Appeals Committee and several CAIS Appeals Committees. Jim remains at the forefront of family farm policy

work as the president of the Organic Federation of Canada and a director of SaskOrganics (Chapter 3).

**Ian Robson** farms with his wife Lois and two daughters at Deleau, Manitoba, where they grow wheat and canola, and raise Polled Hereford cattle. Ian has been a member of the NFU since finishing an Agriculture Diploma at the University of Manitoba in 1977. He has served on the NFU's national board for ten years and is currently NFU Region 5 coordinator (Manitoba). Ian actively contributes to his community by also being active in other organizations; he has served on the local boards of the Manitoba Pool Elevator (Hartney), Agricare, the Hartney Consumers Co-op, and was a councillor of the rural municipality of Sifton (Manitoba) for three years. He is deeply concerned about the economic plight of farmers because the ability of small-scale farmers to earn a living has been vastly reduced. He is constantly motivated by the abilities of the farmers to work together, to cooperate, in efforts to build economic services that benefit local farmers.

**Lucy Sharratt** works as the coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) which brings together sixteen groups to research, monitor and raise awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. Lucy previously worked as a campaigner and researcher on this issue at the Sierra Club of Canada and the Polaris Institute in Ottawa. She also coordinated the International Ban Terminator campaign, which secured a strengthened global moratorium on genetically engineered sterile seed technology. Lucy wrote her graduate thesis on the regulation of genetically engineered foods and crops in Canada. She is the author of "No to Bovine Growth Hormone: A Story of Resistance from Canada" in *Redesigning Life? The Worldwide Challenge to Genetic Engineering*, edited by Brian Tokar, and co-author with Dr. Peter Andr ee of "Unsatisfactory Democracy: Conflict Over Monsanto's Genetically Engineered Wheat" in *Environmental Conflict and Democracy in Canada* edited by Laurie E. Adkin (Chapter 3).

**Ann Slater** runs a CSA program, through which she provides certified organic vegetables to approximately forty people in her community, and she also attends the weekly farmers' market in St. Mary's, Ontario. She has been farming since she was a teenager in the 1970s, as she grew vegetables

and sold them on a local street corner while she made her way through high school. Ann continues to sell virtually all of her vegetables within ten kilometers of her farm, and she also raises a small flock of sheep that provide manure to make compost for fertility. In addition to providing all of the labour on her farm, Ann has been involved with the NFU and the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) for over twenty years, having served on various committees, and as the NFU's vice president of policy, women's president, and as the Region 3 coordinator (also known as the NFU-Ontario president) (Chapter 6).

**Jan Slomp** has been a dairy farmer with his partner Marian since 1979, first in the Netherlands and then in Canada after 1989. Within a few months after arriving in Alberta, they became NFU members. Since 1994, Jan has been active in regional and national positions within the NFU, formally serving as national president (2013–2017) and then serving as the first vice president of policy (2017–2018). As a dairy farmer, Jan's passion is optimizing animal performance from grazing permanent pastures. He finds that this restorative natural system is not only highly productive, it is very low cost, mitigates climate change and restores degraded soils. Jan's commitment to La Vía Campesina is a natural extension of his way of farming and his involvement in the NFU. He feels connected with farmers everywhere who are pushing back the neo-liberal political agenda, practicing restorative agro-ecology and recreating a grassroots-driven social, political and economic agenda. Marian and Jan now reside on a much smaller farm on Vancouver Island (Chapter 11).

**Peter Smith** is an active NFU local member and at the time of the prison farm closures he had a close working knowledge of the prison farms and the positive values that were transferred to the offenders. For privacy reasons, a pseudonym has been used (Chapter 7).

**Coral Sproule** is a first-generation farmer and owner of Queen Beet Farm. Coral actively engages in food sovereignty through farming, advocacy and education. Through her participation in local food movements and regional agricultural food systems projects, she works with others to build a more just, economically viable and ecologically harmonious food system and future for farmers where there is a place at the table for a full diversity of Canadian farmers. Her work off the farm includes facilitation

of food literacy, knowledge sharing, and food skills programs in her local community. Coral applies agroecological principals to her mixed farm near Perth, Ontario, where she farms with her two children. They incorporate seed saving and apply traditional food and farming knowledge to a diversity of plant and animal species. Coral has done significant leadership work within the NFU by serving as an elected official at all levels, including vice president of operations and NFU women's president (2014–2017), and she became the second woman to be elected as national president in 2017 (Chapter 9).

**Fred Tait** was raised on a farm near Rossendale, Manitoba. Because his father suffered from health issues, Fred began running this farm at the age of fifteen. He subsequently bought his own small farm located 1.5 miles from the original family farm. For years, Fred and his wife, Sandra, grew grain, hay and millet for their cattle; when the restructuring of the cattle industry made this no longer viable, they then switched to only raising charolais cattle. Fred has been a farm activist for sixty-two years. He has held leadership positions in the NFU, as Region 5 (Manitoba) coordinator and national vice president. He has been a strong voice against the corporatization of the hog industry, privatization of Plant Breeders' Rights, restructuring of the beef industry, and in revealing nuances in the BSE crisis. He also fought hard to save the Canadian Wheat Board, and block the use of Monsanto's Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone in dairy production and genetically modified wheat in Canada. In 1999, Fred retired from also working as a heavy equipment operator for thirty-three years, and since then he has been tinkering with the farm happily ever since (Chapters 4 and 5).

**Ethel and Gordon Vessey** have been involved with the NFU since its inception. Gordon is the fifth generation on the family farm in PEI, and Ethel grew up as one of ten children on a mixed family farm on PEI. Gordon first became involved in farm organizing in the late 1960s as an Island representative in a dairy farmers' march on Ottawa in 1967, where 20,000 dairy farmers protested over low milk prices and the lack of a federal dairy policy. Gordon and Ethel have four children. Their third child, Jamie, is on the farm with five children and one of his sons is farming with him. The other three work in different fields: one is a police officer, the other works at CIBC, and the youngest runs a cleaning business. Ethel was the

first district women's director for the NFU on PEI and Gordon has been NFU district director and regional coordinator. Gordon and Ethel are active in their community and church (Chapter 8).

**Stewart Wells** was raised on his family's farm near Swift Current, Saskatchewan. After completing studies in agricultural engineering, he returned to the farm in 1976 and has been farming full time ever since. After Terry Toews joined him there, they transitioned to organic production and now produce organic cereals, legumes, oilseeds and alfalfa on their 3,500-acre farm. Stewart got involved in farm politics in 1990 as an elected farmer delegate to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. He has served on the NFU board for twelve years, including eight years as national president from 2001 to 2009. During that time, he represented the NFU on an advisory committee hosted by the Canadian Grain Commission, chaired a Farmer-to-Farmer Trade committee that worked with a Mexican farm organization, travelled to the UK to speak with farm organizations about genetic modification, attended the World Trade Organization talks in Hong Kong (2005), presented numerous papers to Canadian politicians, and worked in coalitions with farm, civil society and environmental organizations. In 2010, he was elected as a farmer board member to the Canadian Wheat Board. He currently serves as on the national board of the NFU (Chapter 5).

**Nettie Wiebe**, along with her partner, Jim Robbins, and their son William, operate an organic, mixed farm near Delisle, Saskatchewan. Nettie served in elected leadership positions of the NFU from 1988 to 1999 and was the first woman to lead a national farm organization in Canada. Nettie also has played a key leadership role in La Vía Campesina. From 1996 to 2004, she was the sole woman on its International Coordinating Committee, overseeing the building of the movement globally and encouraging the full and equal participation of women. She recently retired from teaching ethics at St. Andrews College, University of Saskatchewan. She continues to grow food, write and speak on food issues and advocate for small scale, ecologically healthy farming, food sovereignty and the right to food, here and internationally in venues such as the Committee on World Food Security at the United Nations (Chapters 3, 4, 9 and 11).