

My name is Garry Hayes, and I am a farmer in Shigawake on the Gaspé coast, province of Quebec. I am a graduate of MacDonal College 1967 with a Diploma in Agriculture. I am a shareholder in a family owned mixed farming operation: Pine Crest Farms is a dairy and cow calf operation that has been in operation for 4 generations. Our farm is also actively involved in forest operations with one of the oldest plantations of red pine and spruce on the Gaspé coast planted in 1963. We also run a compost operation under the trade marked name SEAGRO, where we recuperate fish offal and compost it with cattle manure and peat moss. Our products have been marketed world wide since 1985.

Concerning farms and the environment. The public's eye has been drawn increasingly to the polluting effects of farming. It is difficult to accept and understand how environmental agencies are applying increased pressure to farms when the pollution from a small family farm pales in contrast to an entire city which dumps their waste, sewage, polluted snow, etc. into their waterways. Any environmental legislation must be applied equally to ALL citizens, businesses and governments as we all have a role to play in monitoring and managing our waste. Farmers should be encouraged to do their part to protect the environment through an incentive system. Greenhouse gas emissions from cattle farming is a topic of great concern, and within the foreseeable future farmers will be compelled to strictly monitor and control the emissions from their farms. Government must move to put a system in place that rewards farmers for managing their emissions, rather than penalizing them for not meeting certain criteria. Farming must be at the forefront of technology, and the government must take steps to make sure this technology is accessible, and affordable for farmers. To this end:

- 1) Biogas potential must be seriously explored, particularly its potential with methane collection from manure storage facilities.
- 2) Wind power generators that are sufficient to meet a farm's needs must be seriously considered and explored. The net energy savings for both the farmer and the environment are enhanced by potential to sell residual power back into the hydro-electric grid.
- 3) Farmers who demonstrate emissions that are lower than standards should be rewarded with financial incentives to continue well managed growth.

It is important to note that these emission standards should be applied to ALL businesses and private individuals, cities and governments, not exclusively to the farmer.

Concerning opportunity for expansion and the encouragement of the farm sector:

- 1) Grants and subventions have unreasonable stipulations and regulations tied directly to admissibility of a project. The system is such that if a farmer has a project which may be admissible, there is no benefit to the farmer accepting government subventions. Regulations stipulate that the farmer must employ contractors and purchase materials at a premium rather than utilize his own materials, ingenuity and labour to get the job done. By the time contractors and materials are paid, the subvention is of no benefit. The big issue is money, and if

- the government continues their policies as they have in the past there will be fewer farmers every year. Subventions should be granted based on the end result, *not on the means* used to undertake the project.
- 2) Government regulations have retarded the growth of farms within their own immediate market areas. In the name of public health, farmers are so regulated as to be prohibited from exploiting the markets that they are located in to sell their produce. Government officials instead opt to import foreign foods and consumables from countries far and wide where in fact we have NO quality control. The government may quickly defend the health measures in all of these markets we import from – however the farmer AND the consumer can point to the most recent tainted food scandal which saw many pets killed from additives to their pet food which originated in the Far East. It is still uncertain today if any of these additives have actually made it into the human food chain. Centralized processing makes perfect sense for a farmer with the good fortune to be located on the outskirts of a major metropolitan area, but it leaves farmers in the regions, such as ourselves, without the capability of selling our produce, in particular our beef, to local consumers within the bounds of the law. Both farmers and consumers in the regions, are being unfairly penalized for choosing to build a life in our province's regions. It has been recently brought to our attention that there is a current trial study of a mobile slaughter house already in operation in Quebec. How many beef farms will have to close before the government makes a decisive move to support this mobile slaughter house in ALL of the regions? Local consumers want to buy local beef, without the extravagant shipping price tag to and from a distant slaughter house. Canadian Farm Manager newsletter, June/July 2007 edition makes specific reference to mobile slaughter houses in its article "Bridging the gap: Turning a good idea into actual business". The government must be actively taking steps to introduce this service to the regions.
 - 3) One of the best ways to encourage growth in the agricultural sector is to offer farmers interest free loans for a 60 month period.
 - 4) Farming succession and transition planning are much more critical today than they were years ago. The government should institute a farm transfer fund which could ensure that farming is accessible to future generations. The fund could operate not unlike a mutual fund, where farmers could invest at a modest, but guaranteed rate of return. These investments could in turn offer funds for young farmers to borrow at low interest rates of 2% or 3% over 10 to 20 years. Such a fund would allow young farmers the security they need to purchase a farm from retiring farmers, while ensuring the retiring farmer fair market value for his farm.

A farmer is no different than any other individual on the labour force; he needs to have some money to live, he needs to work reasonable hours of 35 to 40 hours a week, he needs to have holidays and go on vacations, and he needs to have money when he retires. A farmer must be a mechanic, plumber, electrician, carpenter, accountant, manager, skilled in animal husbandry, agronomist and labourer. In other words the farmer must be a super bionic person to run his business, and somewhere in there must try to find some time for his family. The government must make a serious effort to listen to their farmers, who are experts in their fields, rather than piling on layers of legislation which result in

making it increasingly impossible for the family farm to survive. In effect the government must come to realize that each individual farmer knows his needs, capabilities and aspirations best, and should be encouraged in their individual growth rather than forced into fitting government formulas of one size fits all. One need only look at the failed experiment of state farming in the former Soviet Union where government regulation drove the people to starvation. Listen to the needs of each individual farmer, and then give him the tools he has stated he needs, and farming will flourish in this province and country.

I would like to thank this commission for coming to Bonaventure and giving local farmers and myself an opportunity to express our concerns so that our proud way of life is preserved for future generations.