



Canadian Young Farmers' Forum

La Table pancanadienne de la relève agricole

Canadian Young Farmers' Forum Strategic Plan

MISSION

The mission of CYFF is to promote the exchange of ideas and to foster collaboration between the young and future farmers of Canada.

PURPOSE

CYFF has as its purpose to provide a multi-faceted educational and development opportunity for young and beginning farmers from across Canada. More specifically, to:

- identify the problems encountered by young people looking to become established in agriculture, and to exchange ideas about solutions applied in Canada and around the world;
- promote the exchange of ideas on issues of training and capacity building, and to identify program needs and preferred delivery methods;
- enable young people throughout Canada to become familiar with the realities of the agriculture industry in every province;
- prepare young and beginning farmers for a more active role in Canada's agricultural organizations;
- consolidate the opinion of young and beginning farmers across Canada on agriculture and rural issues; and
- facilitate the development of and provide support to provincial young farmer structures in every province and territory in the Country.

HISTORY

The CYFF was established in 1997 to facilitate the exchange of information and to foster collaboration between young and beginning farmers across the country. Today, the Forum provides a multi-faceted development opportunity for young farmers (aged 18-40) that serve to inform participants, consolidate young farmer opinion, and offer leadership training and advice.

PRESENT STRUCTURE

Young and beginning farmers from across Canada gather together once each year for the Annual Meeting & Conference of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum. Three delegates from each province, as well as the North West Territories and the Yukon are eligible to attend

the meeting. Delegate selection processes are different in every area, but those who attend the Forum must be under the age of forty.

AFFILIATIONS

Presently there are several provincial affiliates of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum. Many provinces have young farmer organizational structures in place, and others are working towards the establishment of their own provincial young farmer group. It is a primary objective of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum to facilitate the development of provincial/territorial young farmer structures across the country, with each province/territory. Members of provincial organizations automatically become members of the national organization. CYFF will augment the goals of the provincial organizations in part, by providing a national perspective particularly when it comes to dialogue and networking. Common inter-provincial themes will be dealt with by CYFF and regional cooperation will be encouraged. In order to achieve this goal, the following strategic initiatives will be incorporated.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Organizational Growth

At the AGM in 2006, it is expected new by-laws will be passed. With the adoption of new by-laws the Mentorship Board can begin to function efficiently. Interaction between CYFF Board members and the Mentorship Board needs to be consistent and interactive. The mentorship Board and CYFF Board should meet at least twice face to face and should have active participation on teleconference calls.

Over the course of the next three years, an operational manual for Board members will be developed. It will outline Board responsibilities and expectations. It will contain information on public communications, opportunities working with other organizations and strategic, business and work plans.

A business plan will be developed in 2006 which will put together the strategy of having, at least, matching AAFC funding in place by 2010 with growth expected each year. This matching funding will focus on cash contributions.

Aside from maintaining a database of all participants at the AGM, the database will be expanded to include provincial affiliate membership. It is envisioned that within three years, CYFF will have access to a database of 3000 young farmers from across Canada. This network will provide CYFF with internet linking to all members, and therefore allowing a broad base approach to information coming in and going out.

Training & Education

Training and Education are important to young farmers as they develop their farm businesses, and the agriculture industry as a whole. Formal education, as well as extension

training and service are essential to keep young farmers efficient, effective and forward-thinking. Incentive programs for education would help to ensure a progressive agriculture industry through the efforts of young farmers.

Sponsors for "academic scholarships" will be sought from private corporations throughout the country. These scholarships will be awarded to young farmers based on criteria set out by CYFF and the various private sponsors. The scholarships will serve to enhance the training and education opportunities provided to young agricultural producers.

With the completion of the web-site, on-going up-dates will be posted. Web-seminars will be a regular feature. Topics to be broadcast include public and media relations, best management practices, farm transfers, leadership, financial and business planning, and networking and innovation adoption. CYFF will work towards offering each province and territory a series of seminar speakers to provide information on the aforementioned topics.

The AGM has, and will continue to play an important role in the success of the CYFF. In partnership with FCC, it has provided valuable business and financial information to previous attendees. With appropriate private sector support, CYFF would like to increase provincial participation to six participants per province by 2008. This would mean attracting more major corporate sponsors. By having up to sixty leading young farmers from across Canada in one place at one time, it provides numerous opportunities for governments and agri-businesses to obtain information from a critical sector of the industry.

Farm Transfers & Succession Planning

The largest transfer of wealth in our history will take place over the next decade. Support is needed to facilitate this transfer between generations in a way that benefits the agriculture industry and the rural economy. CYFF will work towards providing all young farmers with the tools necessary to ease the burdens of farm transfers and succession planning. The web-site will be the primary resource, but provincially based seminars will also be used.

Young Farmer Voice

Support is needed for young farmer organizations as they fulfill an important role of identifying challenges and developing solutions that work for young and beginning farmers. This kind of perspective is important not only for new policy direction specific to young farmers, but on all areas of agriculture policy that impact the future of a young farmer's livelihood. CYFF will engage other farm organizations, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments as well as agri-food businesses to ensure that the younger farmers' needs and opinions are considered. By the end of year three, CYFF will hope to have fifteen different agri-businesses actively participating in various program initiatives throughout the country. By the end of the three years, at least six provincial General Farm Organizations will have a young farmer on their Board of Directors.

Agriculture Awareness and Membership Recruitment

Public support of the agriculture industry is essential to the long-term viability of Canadian food producers. Young farmers recognize the important role that agriculture awareness

plays in their future success. CYFF will promote agricultural awareness by having a convention booth at numerous agricultural fairs and tradeshow. Information will be distributed about the organization, provincial affiliates and ways of participating in CYFF. Additionally, names and contacts will be gathered to enhance the database.

CYFF will work towards having all agricultural universities and colleges aware of its activities and will use the web-site to promote agriculturally based courses and seminars. It will also promote individual campus student faculties to join the provincial affiliates and promote the CYFF.

Long-term Viability & Stability of the Agriculture Industry

A comprehensive agriculture policy is needed to articulate Canada's vision for the future of the industry. Issues like food security, financial stability, domestic production and commitment to the future of agriculture in Canada need to be addressed. Through provincial affiliates, policy initiatives will be explored and distributed. The database will provide access for feedback. CYFF will take an active role in ensuring that there is a seat at the table for all discussions surrounding agriculture at the federal level. While not espousing particular policy initiatives, it will however, ensure that policy direction incorporates the needs of the young producers and encourages their success.

International Development

CYFF will formalize international liaisons with other international young farmer organizations. In the next three years, CYFF will work towards having a seat at the International Federation of Agricultural Producers young farmers committee. In this way, it will ensure that there is contact with other international young farm organizations. It will participate at leading conferences and will host a North American "Leading Young Farmers" conference in 2008/2009. This will provide international networking opportunities to a wide array of Canadian young farmers. It will focus on business opportunities and challenges. In 2007, CYFF will have gathered enough private sponsorship to send a delegation to next Young Farmers World Congress that is to be held in Argentina in 2007.

Networking

Networking continues to be one of the core purposes of the CYFF. Greater inter-provincial networking opportunities need to be provided to young farmers and as such by 2008, CYFF will assist provincial affiliates in coordinating a series of regional meetings so that young farmers from neighboring provinces can exchange ideas. The regional seminars/meeting will be held in the late fall in order to provide even more information for the AGM. A newsletter will be developed and distributed electronically. There will be opportunities for advertising and corporate sponsorship. As well as provincial affiliates can provide updates on activities and events.

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