



Message from the President

Dear Members,

Since our Annual General Meeting in February 2002, on-going issues have kept your Board of Directors busy. As in past years, the Board is endeavoring to do, whatever we can do, to lobby for the preservation of agricultural land holdings. We all know that even to achieve some success in the preservation of the agricultural use of land, one has to become passionate about it, and extreme perseverance also helps. In the below paragraphs, there are a few of my current observations. In my year-end report I will review of some the specific activities of your Board in 2002.

However first, I would like to introduce to you your Board of Directors for 2002:

President Dave Usherwood
NE of Cochrane
932-1859

Past President Harvey Buckley
SW of Cochrane
932-5561

Vice President Grant McNabb
W of Cochrane
932-4564

Treasurer Peter Hughes
S of Cochrane
932-4432

Secretary Bonnie Lintick
Rockyford
947-2949

Director Dave Johnson
Water Valley
637-2362

Director Al Muchka
Acme

546-2423

Director John Pawson
Cremona
637-2275

Director Wayne
Shuttleworth
Balzac
226-0813

As you can see the Board is representative of the sur-rounding greater Calgary area. Should you, at any time have personal concerns, with regard to the objectives or direction of Action For Agriculture, please feel free to call any of the Directors, so that we can try to be of assistance.

We all know that traditional farming is fast changing with many intense pressures. The 2001 Canada Census taken on May 15, 2002 offer, some interesting facts: There are fewer farms in Canada i.e. 246,900.

- These fewer farms are larger, but are producing more products by volume.
- There are 346,200 farm operators or on average, each farm employs 1.4 persons.
- 89% of farm operators are over 35 years of age and graying. To whom will agriculture's assets be transferred in the next generation?
- The average cost of acquiring a farm is \$800,000 or closer to \$1.4 million in AB.
- The threshold for viable farm operations seems to be \$250,000 in gross receipts.

- Only 14% of all farms have gross receipts exceeding \$250,000.
- At \$250,000 threshold only 19% of all farm operators work off farm.
- At \$250,000 threshold only 2.65% of young farmers (less 35 yrs) work off farm.

It has been expressed that farming and rural communities are in crisis. It has also been reported that 80% of all Canadian live in urban centres, yet quotes from a recent Calgary Herald column by Kerry Williamson raises some interesting questions, in my mind at least. Calgary's Mayor Dave Bronconnier states that, "cities in Canada are in crisis and are at very important crossroads". Mr. Mayor, has any thought been give to the cause of this crisis? At a recent Conference on Handling Growth the challenge was how to move forward without becoming a sprawling urban mess snarled by transport problems, anonymous neighborhoods, and a downtown lacking life. The City of Calgary was cautioned:

- Not to over-extend itself. Balance growth against stresses on the infrastructure.
- As cities spread out there is more stuff to maintain.
- With the growth in the recent past, "we have built up to a situation where the capacity to maintain the service levels is not keeping pace with the growth".

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- Businesses locate in cities with in-place infrastructures and quality lifestyles.
- David Bond of the Canada West Foundation said "It means a fundamental change in the way we think about the city, the way we finance the city and the way we allow the city to evolve over time".

Now let's quote The Western Producer's Barbara Duckworth article of August 8, 2002 as follows, to see if I can connect some common sense from rural folks to the equation. Had I been able to attend Barbara's interview, I would have commented "That due to ever-increasing input cost, low commodity prices and natural disasters

As I see it the issues have been identified, the problem is us, meaning all of us. What is needed is leadership and political will. Won't someone in our entire elected body of official's step up to the plate and lead?

most farmers and rural communities have seen a decline in incomes. This combined with a great demand for rural residential properties have resulted in pressure to develop rural agricultural lands".

- Harry Riva Cambrin of the MD of Foothills – "You have a provincial (Alberta) policy that is really growth oriented from people and a business point of view".
- Harvey Buckley, Past President of AFA – "fears that the drive for development along a 160 kilometer-wide ribbon that bisects the province could push farm and ranch families off the land" Harvey states in another paragraph "that sprawling residential development are economically

unsustainable because they create limited wealth and do not generate enough tax revenue to pay for the services they demand".

- Craig Smith of the Prairie Crocus Ranching Coalition "says the Province likely didn't envision the downside of unlimited growth".

An Alberta Agriculture report on farmland fragmentation recently identified country residential development along Highway 2 as the single largest pressure on Alberta's agricultural land.

- Al Muchka, an AFA Director "feels there is a lack of foresight and planning among rural municipalities," which could have easily read municipalities meaning cities and towns.
- Peter Kivisto the retired Chief Administrative Officer of the MD of Rocky View stated, "Municipalities are not land banks for urban areas".
- Stan Schwartzberger of the MD of Rocky View states that the need is for "municipalities to co-ordinate growth plans and identify agricultural zones, commercial development and country residential areas within rural and city jurisdictions.
- Jerry Bouma a Consultant to Strathcona County states "The County realizes it must manage growth and there are a lot of pressures as a result of growth".
- Les Brost, chair of Alberta's Agrivantage Committee has the last word and "blames the current situation on a lack of communications between rural and urban governments as cities voraciously gobbled up more land for large, single family homes on individual lots". "In not doing that, we may have missed the boat in terms of truly assigning the true costs of urban sprawl to those who are taking advantage of it".

As I see it the issues have been identified, the problem is us, meaning all of us. What is needed is leadership and political will. Won't someone in our entire elected body of official's step up to the plate and lead?

By the time this newsletter reaches your desk, Christmas and New Years Greetings will be in order so our wish is to extend "Joyful & Warm Greetings from Our Respective Outfits to All of Yours"

- **Dave Usherwood**

How Sprawl Aggravates Drought

A recently released report authored by American Rivers, the Natural Resources Defense Council and Smart Growth America in the United States suggests that sprawling development reduces the replenishment of aquifers and surface waters. Using data from the USDA's Natural Inventory over a 15-year period from 1982 to 1997, this groundbreaking study evaluated 18 of the most rapidly growing metro areas in the country.

Sprawl is defined as automobile dependent, low-density urban and suburban developments with a high degree of impervious surfaces illustrated by wide roads, parking lots, roofs and lawns. The report uses estimates of these impervious surfaces, approximate rates of groundwater infiltration and average annual precipitation for these areas. The results are striking.

In the most rapidly sprawling metro area in the US – Atlanta, Georgia – the report estimates that the extreme development over the past 20 years has sent 57 to 133

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billion gallons of polluted runoff into streams and rivers. To put this in perspective, this amount of water would be enough to supply the average daily household needs of 1.5 to 3.6 million people per year. Forty percent of Americans get their water directly from underground sources across the country and groundwater supplies half the water in the rivers and lakes that serve the rest of the population. As over-development washes more rainwater away, instead of replenishing the water table, the impact of drought and resulting water shortages increases.

It is estimated that 365 acres of farmland, forest and other open space succumbs to sprawl developments every hour in the United States. The amount of developed land is growing faster than the population in most areas. The report's authors found that even in areas where populations were declining they were annexing and using increasing amounts of land, proving that many urban centers are not using land efficiently.

In conclusion, the authors suggest directing growth to communities where people already live and work, which will reduce the number of new paved and impervious surfaces that cover the landscape, make existing communities more attractive, improve air quality by reducing traffic congestion and discourage new infrastructure that changes natural hydrologic functions and increases taxpayer burdens. The use of natural stormwater control systems incorporating wetlands and other low impact mechanisms for retaining and filtering runoff is strongly encouraged.

With files from the Environment News Service

Some Thoughts on Climate Change and Kyoto

by Dr. Tim Ball

The Kyoto Protocol is a political solution to a non-existent problem without scientific justification. Not surprisingly, economists, politicians and the general public are split on the possible cost and social impact, but that completely misses the point. Most are unaware that the scientific theory and evidence do not support implementing the Accord. Like many environmental issues, people have very definite views based on very little or incorrect information.

The global warming theory due to human production of carbon dioxide followed a period when the theory of global cooling predicted another ice age. The consensus for cooling was no more accurate than the consensus for warming. Unfortunately, consensus is not a scientific fact. In the late 1980's global temperature trend appeared to shift to warming. A theory proposed that increasing carbon dioxide from human sources was the problem. The theory was accepted without challenge and rapidly became fact. As Richard Lindzen said the consensus was reached before the research had even begun. So far the evidence rarely presented to the public shows that the warming theory is incorrect.

There is no doubt the world has warmed. Temperatures have risen since the 1680's reached a peak in the 1940's and has cooled since then, as satellite data shows. The global warming discussion is about the insupportable claim that 20th century warming is due to increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide from human sources. What explains the warming if it isn't carbon dioxide? Solar physicists and many other

experts report the warming correlates with changes in the sun, not carbon dioxide. Long-term biological and geological evidence also shows the sun as the major cause of temperature change.

There are some very good reasons to reduce consumption of fossil fuels; it's a finite resource, it produces pollution in concentrated urban areas, it will save money in the long term. Climate change is simply the worst reason for urging the reduction or for confirming Kyoto.

A brief summary of the scientific situation shows:

- All speculations of warming are based on the questionable assumption that atmospheric carbon dioxide will double.
- All speculations are made by computer models that have been quantitatively and qualitatively wrong in every single case to date.
- The earth's atmosphere doesn't work like a greenhouse, it's an inappropriate analogy.
- The computer models are global yet we have insufficient data for at least 85% of the world at the surface and virtually none for the atmosphere.
- Solar energy is assumed to be constant, yet solar physicist's show how approximately 97% of temperature change is explained by changes in the sun.
- They assume total atmospheric water vapor is constant with no justification, yet it is 97% of the greenhouse gases by volume.
- Carbon dioxide is less than 3% of the greenhouse effect.

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The evidence doesn't fit the theory. In the 20th century global temperatures increased most from 1900 to 1940 when human production of carbon dioxide was low. Global temperature declined from 1940 to 1980 while human production of carbon dioxide increased the most. In the last six years carbon dioxide and methane levels have leveled and even declined slightly.

The models are of some value in the laboratory where only scientific responsibility is required, but even here they fail miserably. However, when they are used to determine public policy they are worse than inadequate. As Henry Stommel explained, "Without adequate models, we just make political statements."

It's called the Age of Information though Age of Misinformation is better, and Age of Speculation is best. Will Rogers' comment that "Everything I know I read in the newspapers" was only about the written word, now we live in a world of virtual reality in which all forms of communication are doctored. The researcher who discovered Russian missiles in Cuba and other valuable information said he would not trust any visual imagery today because it can be manipulated without detection. In Marshal McLuhan's words "The medium is the message." Public knowledge comes from the media through a lethal sequence where scientific speculation becomes prediction and fact. Special interest groups then amplify the distortions, usually by adding emotional messages that give them the moral high ground. Virtual reality is an oxymoron but applies in a world of speculation, exaggeration, and illusion.

Y2K speculation was a fitting end to the 20th century and a start to the

21st century. It was unsubstantiated speculation that became impending doom and forced governments to spend needless millions. Those who forced the spending, those that benefited, and governments all claimed nothing happened because of their actions, a position invalidated by their own words. They predicted most serious problems in developing countries, but those countries took no action, and nothing happened. How much more good for society if the money was spent for health and education? This

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should serve as an example of the challenge and need to start the new millennium by calming the hysteria, establishing sensible priorities, and dealing with real issues.

Global warming is a more bizarre example of speculation becoming fact. In the 1970's global cooling was the impending doom because the temperature declined from 1940 to 1980. Simple trend analysis turned when temperatures appeared to rise in the 1990's and a similar linear trend but with the opposite slope now applies. How can they both bring disaster? The simple answer is that whenever there is change some gain and some lose. The historic record show the northern hemisphere better off with warmer temperatures. Environment Canada concedes that Canada is better off so what is the greatest threat? Few people can identify the potential

damage of warming. Most people including experts point to melting icecaps and rising sea levels as the major threat. They don't realize this is speculation based on illogical assumptions.

Our knowledge about the world is extremely limited and certainly inadequate as the basis for types of 'predictions' touted in the media, but because this determines the prevailing wisdom it forces inappropriate public policy. The public must learn that the media is strictly a business and has no social interest, despite the moralizing of its unsigned editorials.

Current predictions for global warming are actually speculations based solely on computer models called General Circulation Models (GCM's) that simply don't work. Models are comprised of many grossly simplified mathematical formulas, each representing different parts of the ocean and atmospheric systems. Results from each formula are plugged into other formulae and then blended for a final single figure – average annual global temperature. The trouble is the interactions, and inter-connections can't represent the real world because they are not known. Put numbers into a computer model and you will always get a result, but here it is meaningless: GIGO, garbage in, garbage out.

Philosopher of science Karl Popper developed the doctrine of falsibility that holds that "our belief in any particular natural law cannot have a safer basis than our unsuccessful critical attempts to refute it." One test of falsibility is the accuracy of predictions. A simple definition of science is the ability to predict, so a good test of the models is to measure their predictions. Douglas Hoyt, a renowned climatologist, produced what he called "A

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Greenhouse Warming Scorecard.” He measured 35 computer predictions against the actual outcome with disturbing results. There were 28 wrong predictions, 5 marginally correct and 2 with in-determinate results.

Has the world warmed? Yes, since 1680 temperatures increased up to 1940 as part of natural variability not human activity. Human produced carbon dioxide is the identified culprit, but none of the evidence supports the proposition. Indeed, the facts don't fit the theory. Human activities add about 6 gigatons of carbon (Gt C) (1 gigaton = 1 billion tons) to the atmosphere each year. However, we remove 3 gigatons, through farming (they should get paid for the service), leaving a net addition of 3 gigatons.

It's estimated the atmosphere holds 750 Gt C; the ocean surface 1,000 Gt C; vegetation, soils, and plant debris 2,200 Gt C; and the intermediate and deep ocean 38,000 Gt C. All figures are very crude estimates and a 1% error in any one can account for all human contributions. Measurement of carbon dioxide input and output of the vast boreal forest only began about five years ago. Lack of correlation between carbon dioxide levels and temperature change is troubling.

Whatever the figures, human contribution is miniscule and within the error factor of any part of the carbon cycle. But that's not the biggest problem. Water vapor is 97 percent of the greenhouse gases by volume, carbon dioxide less than 3 percent, yet it is ignored.

The science or evidence doesn't bear examination. People don't ask the right questions and are easily manipulated by scientific experts. I don't know of a qualified science journalist in Canada. Environmental groups are masters of manipulation

and play on fears. What is going on, if the science is not justified?

European countries pushed Kyoto as an environmental issue, but the objective was a carbon tax to raise production costs in North America to offset a cheap energy trade advantage. European carbon dioxide reduction targets are easily achieved. France is over 80 percent nuclear; Britain at least 65 percent, and Germany has nuclear power, but also closed inefficient coal burning plants in East Germany. Debate about the economic impact in Canada is purely academic. Whatever the figure it places us at a trade disadvantage, especially if done unilaterally. Global warming is a magnificent moral shield against opponents of the Protocol, or those who dare to question the science.

Economics are part of the problem with Kyoto, but the real problem is credibility of the science. When politicians masquerade as scientists and scientists as politicians, truth is the victim. Science advances by speculation, or more correctly, hypothesis. A scientist hypothesizes that if certain assumptions are made the following events might occur. The theory is then subjected to testing, usually over many years, and if it holds up becomes a law. Sadly, all that has changed as science is prevented from being science, especially in environmental research. Now, reporters monitor scientific publications picking out articles with sensationalist potential, ones that hypothesize an impending catastrophe. Sometimes the disaster is a natural event with potential to cause loss of life. Media articles usually include many of the conditional words like “could”, “may” or “possibly”, but those aren't what remain with the reader. What they remember are the headlines that transform the hypothesis into a prediction.

Fervent belief in a theory doesn't make it right, as Immunologist Peter Medawar said, “I cannot give any scientist of any age better advice than this, the intensity of conviction that a hypothesis is true has no bearing on whether it is true or not.

- Dr. Tim Ball

Urban Consumption of Agricultural Land in Canada

A report authored by Nancy Hofmann of Statistics Canada in September 2001 found a number of interesting facts – among them:

- “Urban uses have consumed 12 thousand square kilometres of land since 1971. This expansion is equivalent to more than twice the size of Prince Edward Island.
- Nearly ¾ of all arable land in Canada is found in just three provinces – Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario.
- Highest rates of expansions occurred around smaller cities (populations less than 100,000) where doubling of the area of urban land commonly occurred.
- Two major reasons for expansions of urban areas in this 25 year period include both population growth and the troubling trend toward more land being used per urban dwelling.
- Urban residential development is dominated by single detached dwellings located on larger and less expensive lots away from the central core (suburbs).
- In 1971 the average population density of Canadian cities was 1030 persons per square kilometre. By 1996 this density had fallen to 799 persons per square kilometre.
- 52% of Canada's best farmland is located in southern Ontario. By 1996, 18% of this was being used for urban purposes.

NOTICE

**Action for Agriculture
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Monday, February 3, 2003 at 7pm
Balzac Hall (west of Hwy #2 overpass on Hwy #566)**

Guest Speaker:

**JEFF JONES, Rocky Mountain Regional Director
American Farmland Trust**

***"You Can't Undevelop a Subdivision
- Envisioning A Solid Future for Western Agriculture "***

On the Bookshelf

Grassland: The History, Biology, Politics and Promise of the American Prairie by Richard Manning. Penguin USA, ISBN: 0140233881, July 1997

The Limitless City: A Primer on the Urban Sprawl Debate by Oliver Gilham, Alex MacLean (photographer). Island Press, ISBN: 1559638338, April 2002

Solving Sprawl: Models of Smart Growth in Communities Across America by F. Kaid Benfield, Jutka Terris, Nancy Vorsanger, Parris Glendening. Natural Resource Defense Council, ISBN: 1893340333, November 2001

When City and Country Collide: Managing Growth in the Metropolitan Fringe by Thomas L. Daniels. Island Press, ISBN: 1559635975, November 1998

**New Action for Agriculture
Publication**

Action for Agriculture has very recently put together a new publication entitled "*So You Want to Fight A LULU: How to Influence Land Use Decisions in Your Neighborhood*". The board would like to thank Bob Anderson for his expertise and efforts in this endeavor. Contact the office for your copy.

Get Well Soon

Harvey Buckley is at home healing very nicely from hip joint replacement surgery. We all wish him a fast recovery.

**Action for Agriculture
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Grant McNabb.....Cochrane
Peter Hughes.....Jumping Pound
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Dave Johnson.....Water Valley
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