



## RECENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT OCTOBER, 2006

The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate is the umbrella organization that unites the province's producers, processors, buyers, traders, certifiers and consumers of certified organic food and fibre. It is incorporated as a non-profit membership organization. SOD's mission statement is "*To champion the development of organic agriculture in a democratic manner*" and the Vision Statement is "*Food for Life*".

Our initiatives provide:

- A **source** for organic production, research information and public education.
- A **forum** that brings together producers and other players in the organic food system, including governments and government agencies.
- **Research** into, and development of, sustainable practices for organic agriculture.
- **Planning** and **presentation** of extension education.
- **Representation** of the industry on important policy issues.
- Public **information** and education.

This report provides details on our recent activities and achievements.

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**The SOD Newsletter.**

Over the past several years, the SOD Newsletter has been a wealth of information and an extremely valuable communication tool for SOD members and the Saskatchewan organic sector in general. Many people have contributed to the content of each issue, with the final editing done very ably by SOD Administrator Lester Wyatt, and layout and design done by Dianne Manegre.

A look at the last issue illustrates the wealth and diversity of a newsletter's typical content: Meet Your Organic Neighbours on a Virtual Farm Tour, Update on the Proposed Saskatchewan Organic Commission, SOD-OAPF Update, membership information on the "Saskatchewan Organic Livestock Co-operative Ltd.", advertisements for Saskatchewan organic businesses, a message from Lon Borgerson – Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming, Crop Insurance-Organic Green Manure Crops and Summer fallow Coverage, an invitation to join the new SOD List-Serve, an article by Brenda Frick that punctures the myth that organic cannot feed the world, News about SOD receiving a \$125,000 grant from the provincial government, an article "New Studies Back Benefits of Organic Diet", an article by Brenda Frick on organic production practices based on observations by organic inspectors, update on the progress of the development of the Canadian National Standard by Paddy Doherty, update on the field research projects and other activities of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, U of S campus.

### **The SOD and OAPF Websites.**

SOD Director and OAPF Committee member Cathy Holtslander has been instrumental in keeping the OAPF website updated and overseeing the first phase of renovation of both the OAPF and SOD sides of the website. She is continuing work on phase two redesign of the SOD site. The address for both websites is: [www.saskorganic.com](http://www.saskorganic.com)

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### **SOD Re-organization and organic sector consultation.**

In the spring of 2003 the SOD-Organizational Review Committee was struck to examine the organizational needs of the Saskatchewan organic sector and find ways to improve the democratic structure and funding base of SOD. The committee appointed by the SOD Board was chaired by Dr. Gary Story, and members were Bob Balfour, Gord Hamblin, Lyle Herman, Gene Kessler, Walter Nisbett, Doug Bone, Dr. Mary Beckie, Lester Wyatt, and advisors Blaine Reckseidler (Sask. Ag. and Food), Simon Weseen (U of S), and Mark Schnell (Standards Board of Canada). The committee submitted its final 90 page report to the SOD Board and other interested parties at a meeting in Saskatoon on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Two other organizational proposals (one by Debbie Miller and one by Wally Hamm) were also presented at this meeting.

To further the reorganization process, and solicit input from the organic community, a SOD Consultation Meeting was held January 15, 2005 at Cedar Lodge near Dundurn, Saskatchewan. Among the other presenters at this meeting, SOD brought in Pierre Gaudet of the Quebec Organic Producer's Association to speak about the organic organizational structures in that province. In addition to this consultation meeting, a survey was distributed at the November 2004 Organic Connections Conference and also mailed to Saskatchewan organic producers in order to collect their opinions.

The culmination of this re-evaluation process was later expressed in a motion passed by the SOD Board at a meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005. In its entirety the motion reads:

***Moved** by Doug Bone, seconded Joan Harrison, and adopted by the board with Mike Kasper and Denis Brodner abstaining, citing concern with the increase in the fee structure and marketing of the organization.*

***Whereas:** The Vision Statement of the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate is, "Food For Life" and the Mission Statement is "To Champion the Development of Organic Agriculture" and*

***Whereas:** The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate Board of Directors recognizes that in order to fulfill its stated Vision and Mission sustainable into the future, an increased membership with appropriate democratic representation must be built, and funding for the organization also must be increased, and*

***Whereas:** SOD must take steps to be financially sustainable in order to maintain the ability in the future to deal with issues crucial to its members. Benefits that SOD has provided to the entire organic sector include:*

- a) Sponsored and participated in organic conferences.*
- b) The ongoing development of the National Organic Standards.*
- c) Safeguarding organic integrity from GMO contamination.*
- d) Coordinating organic production research. Ex. Crop Production Manual.*
- f) Lobbying government so an organic perspective is reflected in public policy.*
- g) The promotion of organic food and products to consumers.*
- h) To act as a forum for addressing internal and ideological conflicts.*

*i) Working with Crop Insurance to have the program acknowledge and reflect organic crop production practices in its coverage.*

*j) SOD played a major role and worked with other organizations to halt the introduction of genetically engineered wheat. SOD's support of the Class Action Lawsuit against Monsanto and Bayer Crop Science is ongoing. And*

*Whereas: The SOD Board of Directors recognizes that building a strong, viable organization is a process that must be taken one step at a time.*

***Therefore be it resolved that:***

- 1) SOD will vigorously pursue building its membership by various means. For the present it will maintain its current organizational structure.*
- 2) SOD will conduct a major telephone campaign to directly recruit members at large. It will focus at present on building membership among its producers.*
- 3) SOD will enable its members at large to meet at the SOD annual meeting to form a member's at large committee. This committee will then elect two of their members as delegates to the SOD Board of Directors.*
- 4) SOD will engage in a major effort to encourage its members to also become members of the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) organization, and will promote COG and its magazine the Canadian Organic Grower.*
- 5) The SOD board recommends an increase in the annual membership fee to \$ 75.00 for the following membership categories: each production unit in a producer organization and for each member at large.*
- 6) The SOD Board recommends implementing the annual membership fee as an optional SOD only membership category or a SOD-COG membership category of \$100.00*
- 7) SOD will move to a semi-annual billing system for the membership collected through producer organizations. And*
- 8) SOD will not pursue a check off system of funding at this time.*

A bylaw subcommittee was struck at a SOD Directors Regular Meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005, in order to review the SOD bylaws and draft proposed amendments necessary to reflect the intent of the above motion, as well as on voting rights and the annual meeting. The committee members were Gerry Metrunc, Bill Rees and Mike Kasper. The draft of proposed changes were presented by this committee and passed at the SOD Annual Meeting on April 16, 2005 in Bruno, and represents a considerable overhaul of the SOD Bylaws.

Under the leadership of then SOD President Arnold Taylor, the bylaw changes, the re-organization initiative, and the many other activities which raised the profile of SOD have extensively rejuvenated the organization.

**SOD Research Committee work on changes to Crop Insurance.**

Among other things, SOD Research Committee members Dayton Funk, Gerry Metrunc, Ken Stull and Bob Willick have participated in work over the last two years which has resulted in the following changes to the crop Insurance Program:

- Summer-fallow acres plow down dates changed to suit organic management.
- Contract price option to better reflect true values of organic production.
- Option for whole farm insurance and more coverage per acre.
- Provided information and education for crop adjusters on organic methods and practices.

This committee continues its work, with more meetings planned, and is working towards the following changes:

- Crop Insurance for organic forage to comply with CAIS.
- Mandatory organic insurance for growers to comply with CAIS.
- Move towards whole farm insurance without deadlines for plow-downs etc.
- Value of forage = \$60/T; Certified Organic Forage = \$75/T; Acres in basket.

- Value of crop claimed under wildlife damage should use organic prices.
- Raise the rate of reimbursement for cleaning deer feces out of grain.
- The value of organic forage and forage seed should be established.
- Mowing of green manures accepted as summer-fallow.
- Changes made to accepted methods of grasshopper control.

#### **SOD Research Committee work on 'CAIS' policy.**

The SOD Research Committee has invited CAIS policy and economic advisors, along with Crop Insurance officials to discuss improvements to both programs which would benefit organic producers. Issues in the CAIS program to be addressed would include the following:

- Transitional period (recognizing values and margins).
- Value-added on the farm and co-production, and how it affects organic margins.
- Recognition in the program of all certified organic production.
- Placement of organic production in the correct baskets with correct values.

Issues in the Crop Insurance Program for further discussion:

- Organic livestock insurance.
- Dropping the summer-fallow option in favour of individual based coverage.

#### **Monitoring of the Avian Influenza situation.**

In June 2006, SOD responded to an article in the Sask. Ag. and Food 'Agriview' publication that stated "Saskatchewan's poultry industry is well protected because commercial birds are raised in confined barns." A letter sent to the Sask. Ag. and Food Communication Branch by Doug Bone on behalf of SOD, cited an article from "The Guardian" which says that it may be intensive confined poultry operations, not outdoor flocks that are the vector for the spread of Avian Influenza. In a reply to this letter, Minister of Agriculture Mark Wartman challenged SOD to share our organization's plans for prevention of diseases such as Avian Influenza, in free-range poultry. This is an issue that SOD may want to follow upon.

#### **Board members' connections with other organizations.**

SOD Board members participate in, and interact with many other organizations such as: SEN (Saskatchewan Environmental Network), APAS (Agricultural Producers' Association), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), NFU (National Farmer's Union), BIAC (Beef Industry Advisory Committee), SOC (Saskatchewan Organic Commission), S.O.L (Saskatchewan Organic Livestock Co-operative Ltd.), LOFO (Local Food Project), the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC), the Advisory Committee for Simon Weseen (Trade Market Analyst at the U of S), Organic Connections Conference, etc.. Debbie Miller, for instance, is President of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) Accredited Certifier's Body Association. She also serves on the steering committee of the fledgling Certification Body Forum, another International group that will be similar to IFOAM accredited certifiers, but will include non-IFOAM accredited certifiers.

There have also been many examples of SOD working in co-operation with other national NGO's on projects of mutual interest. The synergy created by these relationships and the resulting flow of ideas, all through the conduit of the SOD organization, has been of great benefit to the Saskatchewan organic community. In turn this network of involvement has enabled SOD to put forward the perspective of Saskatchewan organic farmers in an effective way in many forums.

#### **Participation in the November 12-14, 2006 Organic Connections Conference.**

The SOD-OAPF committee is hosting a film room at the conference. The purposes will be as a fundraiser, to raise awareness about GMO and food issues, and to build support for SOD and the legal action. The films to be shown are: "Seeds of Change", "The Genetic Revolution" (David Suzuki), "The Future of Food", and "The Fight for True Farming".

SOD is also sponsoring the poster contest for university students doing organic-friendly research.

In the past SOD has participated in the other Organic Connections Conferences, and carried advertising for them in the SOD Newsletter.

#### **Participation in the 'Local Food Project', (LOFO).**

This is an initiative that is promoting local food for local consumption via a website that will function as a combination directory, educational tool and research tool by gathering data on supply and demand. SOD members (Gene Kessler, Debbie Miller, Cathy Holtlander, Doug Bone, and possibly others) are participating on the discussion list, where they develop and review funding proposals, and guide the project. The group includes several professors from the University of Regina, urban community groups, SOD members, Sol members, members of Food Secure Saskatchewan, and others.

SOD has also written a letter of support for the U of R Department of Computer Science "Information Technology in Support of Civic Agriculture" project, spearheaded by Dr. Daryl Hepting (of the LOFO project). SOD has committed to working with the U of R researchers on this project which directly mirrors many of SOD's goals and priorities including: the implementation of a thriving, environmentally sustainable agricultural production and processing sector in Saskatchewan, the reinforcement of strong and resourceful agricultural people and families in Saskatchewan, support for researching diversification of the agriculture and food sectors in Saskatchewan, and researching methods to develop a sustainable and equitable food system comprised of healthy food and fair compensation for Saskatchewan producers.

#### **Participation in 'Food Secure Saskatchewan'.**

Food Secure Saskatchewan is a provincial umbrella group that brings together producers, consumers, community groups, policy makers and government agencies that are working on aspects of food security. An important focus is closing the distance and dollar gaps between food producers and consumers by encouraging alternative local food systems. There is a push to get more local food into food programs such as school lunch programs in community schools. All the 'Food Charter' groups are part of this organization. On behalf of SOD, board member Cathy Holtlander attended two of the round tables leading up to the formation of this organization as well as the AGM in Prince Albert in May 2006. Cathy also handed out OAPF brochures at this meeting.

#### **SOD/OAPF representation at the Ness Creek Music Festival.**

Lester Wyatt and other volunteers staffed a table at the Ness Creek Music Festival Eco village in 2004, 2005 and 2006 to promote SOD as an organization and to raise awareness of the class action and to raise funds for the OAPF,

#### **Participation in the CCPA 'Citizen's Budget Commission'.**

On behalf of SOD, Doug Bone gave a presentation in December 2005 to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Citizens' Budget Commission, which was organized to collect people's thoughts about taxation on Saskatchewan's economy and what the fiscal priorities for the provincial government should be. This alternate forum was designed to provide balance to what the government had heard from the big business lobby groups. Earlier in the year during the Business Tax Commission, big business lobby groups tried to convince government to reduce business taxes (at the expense of essential public services). Some conclusions of the CCPA Saskatchewan Alternate Budget of interest to rural areas and the organic sector were:

- Resource Royalties should be increased substantially.
- Additional resources to municipalities to offset regressive education property taxes.
- Increase funding to community based organizations.
- Expanding the number of community health centres that employ salaried doctors.

- Increase funding for the promotion of healthy living and preventing chronic disease, and programs to increase physical activity and access to nutritious food.
  - Support for local food systems, organic agriculture and environmental stewardship.
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### **SOD receives \$125,000 grant, and the Saskatchewan Organic Forum.**

At the December 3, 2005 SOD Directors Regular Meeting, there was a discussion with Scott Wright, who was then Director of Crop Development, Sask. Ag & Food, about a provincial government plan to commit some money to organic agriculture. Scott suggested that SOD as a government-recognized representative organization of provincial organics, engage other organic sector people and various relevant government departments in a forum format to identify and prioritize some specific projects of benefit to the organic sector to which this funding could be directed.

Subsequently, a brainstorming session and then three Saskatchewan Organic Forum meetings facilitated by Doug Bone have been held. The participants engaged in a four part "visioning" process that helped to answer the question "where do we want to go?", and then to identify and prioritize some project possibilities which would best take the organic sector toward that goal or "vision".

In the meantime, in the spring of 2006, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food provided SOD with a grant of \$125,000 "to be administered by SOD to culture marketing and value added expansion in Saskatchewan." According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between SOD and the Department, a steering committee composed of two individuals named by SOD and two individuals from Sask. Ag. & Food will be responsible for final approval of the projects, and for overall co-ordination.

At a Saskatchewan Organic Forum meeting at Moose Jaw on August 11, 2006, nine fairly specific ideas for project possibilities were brought forward and discussed. All of these projects as discussed may or may not fall within the guidelines set out by the MOU, and it will now be up to the SOD Board to tailor them to the terms of the MOU. According to the MOU, eligible project areas include assistance for value added processing, value chains, market development, and research studies related to markets and value adding, with remaining research funds to be used for other projects as identified by the steering committee.

On August 16, 2006, Don Kizlyk and Doug Bone were named as the two SOD members on the steering committee. A motion was also passed to the effect that the SOD Board will develop and submit the project proposals subject to steering committee approval, and will also develop guidelines for accepting 3<sup>rd</sup>-party funding proposals (also subject to steering committee approval). The challenge for the SOD Board will now be to flesh out and prioritize the projects for immediate attention and approval of the steering committee.

### **SOD support for the 'Saskatchewan Organic Commission' (SOC).**

On behalf of SOD, Doug Bone wrote a letter of support for SOC which was published in the Western Producer. This was in response to the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers' half page advertisement urging organic farmers to vote "No" in a ballot requesting support in the formation of an elected board which would administer and collect check-off funds. The letter expressed that judging from the substantial support the ballot received it was clear organic farmers felt a structure was needed to give them more say in how both check-off dollars are spent, and to influence the direction of agricultural research. As well as voicing SOD support for the efforts of the SOC Interim Board, it also asked for the co-operation and understanding of the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and other organizations.

### **SOD support for the 'Organic Demonstration Farm' at Davidson Saskatchewan.**

On August 15, 2005, on behalf of SOD, David Orchard sent a letter to Minister of Agriculture Mark Wartman expressing SOD's support (through a resolution made on June 24, 2005) for funding for the 'Organic Research Farm'. Mr. Wartman replied that "SAF encourages the Back to the Farm Research Foundation to pursue funding through the SAF Agriculture Development Fund." As point person, Doug Bone communicated to Elmer Laird SOD's willingness to assist with the Funding application. On February 6, 2006, on behalf of SOD, Arnold Taylor wrote to Dr. Abdul Jalil, Director of the Agricultural Research Branch, Sask. Ag. and Food, urging his department to give due consideration to the Back to the Farm Research Foundation's funding application.

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### **SOD participation in the Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment**

In the spring of 2006, SOD received funding from Saskatchewan Learning's Sector Partnerships Program in order to carry out an Organic Training Needs Assessment. The stated purpose of the study is to "... determine the training needs of the Organic community and what education or training products could be assembled at the production, processing, marketing, certification and consumer awareness levels to help this industry move ahead in the province." The study also looked at the concept of a Saskatchewan based Organic Learning Centre. Converting the Prairie Ursuline Centre in Bruno to this use was one of the possibilities considered.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF), has identified organics as an opportunity area, and education and training are seen as critical elements in nurturing this growing sector according to Don Perrault, Agri-Business Development Specialist with SAF, and chair of the Organic Training Needs Working Group Committee. This steering committee, put into place to provide direction for the study, is comprised of representatives of SOD (Arnold Taylor), the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Sagehill Business Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, and the Prairie Ursuline Centre in Bruno.

Following a tendering process in December 2005, Sage Management Services was engaged to do the study. Information was gathered from the organic sector via group sessions, surveys, internet and web based research, and by telephone interviews. The report is due to be released to the public soon, and will be available on the SOD website at [www.saskorganic.com](http://www.saskorganic.com)

### **Revision of the organic production manual, *Organic Farming on the Prairies*.**

Debbie Miller is chairing the Production Manual Committee which was very active last year. The committee (Debbie Miller, Norm Bromm, Blaine Reckseidler, Joan Harrison, Simon Weseen, Brenda Frick) developed a detailed proposed table of contents for the revised version, which will have a wider scope than the present manual. The committee also identified people to work on various components and sources for much of the material, negotiated with the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada [the OACC is Halifax based], as a potential partner, and applied for funding, with Brenda Frick as editor. Proposals have gone in to funding agencies but the project has been declined. Work on the revised manual is on hold until a source of funding is secured.

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### **SOD ... the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Canadian Organic Growers (COG).**

As the Saskatchewan chapter of COG, SOD is part of Canada's only national membership-based organization with members in 15 different chapters in all regions of Canada. COG is also connected to the international organic community through membership in the 'International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements' (IFOAM). Not all COG members run certified organic operations, but they share a vision for a sustainable bio-regionally based organic food system. Members believe that organic

food production is the best choice for the health of consumers and producers, for the protection and enhancement of the environment, and for the sustainability of the food system.

After many months of discussion, SOD voted to become the Saskatchewan Chapter of COG in 2002. The SOD Board functions as the COG Chapter Board, and the SOD organization is represented on the COG Board by the Prairie Regional Representative, a person elected by SOD and the Organic Food Council Manitoba ... the acting Manitoba COG chapter. Arnold Taylor is presently the acting Prairie Regional Representative and is midway into a two year term.

Either individually or through their producer organizations, SOD members generally have the option of having a joint membership in COG. COG members receive the quarterly magazine *The Canadian Organic Grower*, access to COG publications and videos, and the extensive COG lending library, which offers a free mail service of hundreds of organic reference books and materials. COG produces technical handbooks including *Organic Field Crop Handbook*, the *Organic Livestock Handbook*, and *Gaining Ground: Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming*. COG members receive discounts on these publications. Each year COG awards the Mary Perlmutter Scholarship to a promising university student to further their research on organic agriculture. The COG website is at [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)

### **SOD participation in developing National Standards & Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC).**

Past SOD President Arnold Taylor and SOD Board member Debbie Miller have been serving on the ORC which is responsible for developing the National Regulation. They are also both voting members of the Canadian General Standards Board Technical Committee, which is the committee working on the National Standards. There has been steady progress on the development of National Standards. On September 2, 2006, Arnold informed the SOD directors that:

1. *The Standard has been accepted by the Standards Council.*
2. *The Regulation has been Gazette'd in the Canada Gazette (for a 75 day comment period).*
3. *The CORC (Canadian Organic Regulation Council), is in the final process of incorporation. We will oversee the implementation of the Regulation. This is the culmination of several years of hard work. Those of us on the Organic Regulatory Committee (ORC) are to be heartily congratulated*

By motion at the June 28-29 2006 SOD Board meeting in Tisdale, Arnold was appointed to represent Saskatchewan on the Canadian Organic Regulation Council (CORC), the permanent body that will replace the ad-hoc ORC.

Throughout the process, SOD has been in steadfast support of the development of a Canadian National Standard and Regulation. At the March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006 SOD Annual General Meeting, the following resolution was adopted:

**Motion:** *Doug Bone/Cathy Holtslander, that we adopt the following resolution to support the Organic Regulatory Commission's work:*

*Whereas organic agriculture will benefit from a Canadian Organic Standard and Regulation; and*

*Whereas the development of the proposed standard and regulation has been done via a transparent, participatory and democratic process led by the certified organic sector; and*

*Whereas delay in adopting a Canadian Organic Standard and Regulation is a disadvantage to Canadian certified organic farmers, processors, retailers and consumers;*

*Therefore be it resolved that SOD support the expeditious adoption and implementation of the Canadian Organic Standard and Regulation. AIF – Carried.*

### **SOD meetings with the Provincial NDP Government Caucus.**

Members of the SOD Board of Directors had a breakfast meeting with Premier Lorne Calvert, 30 members of the NDP Caucus and nine of their staff on April 26, 2005. The theme of the meeting was "Organics, a Vision and Opportunity for Saskatchewan. Following introductory remarks by then SOD president Arnold Taylor, Debbie Miller gave a Power-Point presentation on SOD and organics in general. David Orchard then spoke on the challenges and opportunities for organics and the government, followed by a useful and cordial discussion. MLA Lon Borgerson commented afterward that the SOD presentation was the best he had seen given to caucus. SOD directors left with the feeling that their message had been heard and that the government does view organic agriculture as an area of opportunity. SOD has another of these breakfast meetings scheduled with the government caucus on March 20, 2007.

### **SOD participation in the "Creating a Knowledge Commons in Saskatchewan" Forum.**

This forum held in November 2005 was organized by Dr Daryl Hepting, Department of Computer Science at the U of Regina, to explore how the privatization and commercialization of knowledge and the public domain has changed the nature of our social and political relationships. Of particular interest to the organic sector is how farmer's traditional role as stewards of the land is threatened by making them dependent on intellectual property owned by transnational corporations. Brewster Kneen was the keynote speaker and other speakers and panelists included people from university philosophy and sociology departments, health-care, library and journalism professionals, the motion picture industry, the information technology sector, community activist organizations, the Craik Sustainable Living Project, the First Nations community, and agriculture. Doug Bone participated as a panelist on behalf of SOD. The afternoon sessions concentrated on solutions by identifying ways citizens can reclaim knowledge, information and culture "as commonly held resources for the public good."

### **SOD participation in the 'FLAG' discussions.**

Dayton Funk has been representing SOD in the "Farm Leaders Advisory Group" [FLAG] discussions which were initiated in early March 2006, by Provincial Agriculture Minister Mark Wartman in order to have a fresh look at the present Ag. Policy Framework. Since the initial meeting of 60 farm and Ag.-Industry leaders, Dayton was chosen as one of 9 FLAG executives to continue in assisting the Hon. Mark Wartman on the future direction of agricultural policy in Saskatchewan. Meetings are held monthly.

### **SOD Position Paper on Proposed Changes to the Plant Breeders Rights Act.**

With assistance from the NFU, Doug Bone and the SOD Board developed this paper in response to proposed government changes to PBR which would limit the ability of farmers to save their own seeds. The paper also stressed its support for publicly funded agricultural research and deplored the trend toward publicly funded research partnerships with private for profit companies, which in effect results in a taxpayer subsidy to the corporate agricultural sector with little benefit to farmer's bottom lines This document, which was sent in February 2005 as a letter to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is available on the SOD website. SOD also signed on to the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) paper in opposition to the proposed changes to PBR legislation.

### **SOD participation in the 'National Forum on Seed' working group.**

On behalf of SOD, Cathy Holtslander attended the meeting of this group in April 2006 where changes to the variety registration system were being discussed. Her report of that meeting was presented to the SOD Directors. Cathy's work as one of the organizers for the Beyond Factory Farming Coalition enables her to monitor GMO developments such as food and feed approval of GMO alfalfa, communicate with other organizations, access and pass on valuable information to SOD directors, and assist our organization with communications and media relations.

**SOD-OAPF response to the CWB document *Conditions for the Introduction of Genetically Modified Wheat*** This document, outlining the conditions the CWB thought necessary for the introduction of GMO wheat was developed by the Canadian Wheat Board along with representatives of the Canadian Seed Growers Association, the Inland Terminal Association, the Canadian Millers association, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian Food inspection Agency, Monsanto Canada, and one "Farmer at Large".

The CWB asked for confirmation from SOD that it believed the conditions developed in the CWB document '*Conditions for the Introduction of Genetically Modified Wheat*' were "necessary and sufficient to protect the interests of farmers and customers". The CWB also stated that the conditions for the introduction of GMO wheat should be formally incorporated into the regulatory process. On behalf of SOD, Marc Loiselle and Doug Bone drafted a letter of response to the CWB which reads in part:

*Adrian Measner  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Canadian Wheat Board*

*"In response to your letter of February 5, 2003, the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate does not support any initiative that will compromise the future ability of farmers to grow non-GMO wheat and that will compromise the ability for people to choose food that is not genetically engineered."*

*"This group known as the 'Canadian Grain Industry Working Group on GM Wheat' does not represent the full spectrum of views held by farmers, and certainly not consumers of wheat products. Consumers after all, should be the final arbiters of any direction the food producing sector takes in regards to the introduction of GM wheat."*

*"The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate does not support the thrust of this document which we believe is fundamentally flawed in many of its assumptions. As one example, it is faulty logic to say that the ability to meet requirements for non-GM wheat markets would depend in part on the establishment of an "achievable tolerance level for GM wheat" in non-GM wheat shipments."*

*It is implied in this wily language that we must be prepared to accept some level of CG contamination. Presently Saskatchewan farmers are able to achieve a **zero** GM contamination level to supply our market. We in SOD believe it is our right to continue to have that ability. Customers of organic wheat do not want their wheat contaminated by genetically modified varieties ... period. Furthermore, SOD believes that anyone who contaminates the food system at whatever level, with GM crops, and compromises our ability to serve that market; that they be held liable."*

*"Therefore the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate will not endorse the enclosed draft "sign on" letter to the minister of Agriculture Lyle Vanclief, asking for regulatory change which incorporates the conditions contained in the document 'Conditions for the Introduction of Genetically Modified Wheat' and more particularly the proposed regulatory market impact test as outlined in the supplementary document 'Market Impact and Potential Introduction of Genetically Modified Wheat'."*

*"Based on the Precautionary Principle, all countries have the right to impose a moratorium or outright ban on the introduction of GMO's into the environment and food chain. concerted efforts must be done to ensure that Canada adhere to the Precautionary Principle that it is signatory to, and act immediately to stop further investment, development, testing, unconfined release approvals and commercial release of GE wheat."*

*"We therefore urge the CWB to abandon the flawed work of the 'Grain Industry Working Group on GM Wheat', and put its support behind organic and other non-GM producers who are working with the long term interests of their customers in mind."*

*Sincerely,  
Marc Loiselle  
Communications & Research Director, SOD-OAPF Committee  
and member of SOD Research & Development Committee*

*cc: Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Minister Responsible for the CWB, Ralph Goodale  
Canadian food Inspection Agency  
Canadian Grain Commission*

*Canadian National Millers Association  
National Farmer's Union  
Canadian Federation of Agriculture  
Western Grain Elevator Association*

### **Legal Action against Monsanto and Bayer ... ongoing work of the OAPF Committee.**

The SOD Organic Agriculture Protection Fund Committee (OAPF) continues to co-ordinate and raise money to fund the lawsuit (launched in January, 2002), which seeks damages for losses due to GMO contamination of certified organic crops and fields in Saskatchewan. The lawsuit, among other things, has meant that SOD is now a nationally and internationally recognized and respected representational organic organization.

Committee members are Arnold Taylor, Marc Loiselle, Cathy Holtslander, Dale Beaudoin, Larry Hoffman, Jennifer Bromm, Norm Bromm, Mike Kasper, and Doug Bone, with Lester Wyatt as acting administrator. Advisors are Debbie Miller, Mary Beckie, and Wally Hamm. Legal Counsel is Terry Zakreski of Priel, Stevenson, Hood and Thornton, Saskatoon. Preparations are being made for the appeal hearing (likely in December 2006) seeking to overturn the lower court decision denying us class certification.

In May 2004, the OAPF was invited to the Danish government's Danish Technology Board hearings on the issues around Coexistence (GMOs with non-GMO crops). Cathy Holtslander went at the expense of the Danish government, and presented to the Board, which is made up of members of their parliament from all parties. It was open to the public, with over 200 people present to listen. Cathy also met presenters from European organic agriculture and anti-GMO groups who presented or were listening.

In February 2005 Arnold Taylor attended the Adventitious Presence Workshop and the Varietal Purity Workshop in Ottawa, sponsored by Agriculture & Agri-Food (AAFC), Canada, and who paid trip expenses.

In April 2005, OAPF committee member Jennifer Bromm (along with Colleen Ross from the NFU), traveled to India thanks to Interpares, an organization dedicated to promoting international justice. She was the guest of a group battling the devastation caused by genetically engineered BT cotton. She was representing the OAPF in discussions concerning the implications our lawsuit has in relation to Indian farmers' struggle against Monsanto.

A few examples of other fund and awareness raising trips made by OAPF Committee members in the past are: Arnold Taylor helped launch the Seeds of Doubt Campaign of the British Soil Association in September 2002 and was also a panel member on a GMO panel in another Soil Association sponsored trip to their 2003 annual meeting in England. Greenpeace sponsored Marc Loiselle's appearance in 2003 in Grenoble France as a witness for the defense in the trial of 10 men accused of GE corn test plot destruction. Bob and Barb Willick did a grueling series of town hall meetings on the issue of GMO contamination in a Greenpeace sponsored tour across parts of Australia and New Zealand in March 2003. Doug Bone gave a presentation at a fundraiser put on by the 'Saltspringers for Safe Food', while on a trip to BC in March 2003. Marc attended the 'Slow Food' event in Torino Italy in October 2004, doing interviews and raising awareness of GMO issues. He also was interviewed in the film 'Slow Food – Terre Madre' (Mother Earth), which was filmed at the event.

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Dr David Suzuki gave a benefit lecture in support of the OAPF at the Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts. The event committee members were Marion and Ray McBride, Lori Latta (SCIC), Marion Leneczek, Will Oddie, Jason Freeman, and Sharon and Arnold Taylor. Film maker Ian Mauro spoke before Dr. Suzuki and an excerpt of his documentary film about our case, Battling the Biotech Gene Giants, was shown. Following Dr. Suzuki's presentation, he and legal counsel Terry Zakreski, and Arnold Taylor participated in a panel discussion. The event itself raised over \$18,000 with about a thousand people attending. With assistance from Ian Mauro, a DVD, (The Genetic Revolution), of Dr.

David Suzuki's lecture and excerpts of Ian's documentary was produced and its sales continue to be a valuable revenue source and educational tool for the OAPF.

OAPF committee member Maggie Mumm with assistance from the OAPF Committee, developed a position paper on GMO alfalfa (which was adopted at the March 23, 2006 AGM by the SOD Board), calling on the federal government to take measures to stop its introduction into Canada. It is available on the OAPF side of the SOD website. The OAPF continues to monitor GMO developments such as the approval of Round-Up Ready Alfalfa and wheat, and passes this information on to the SOD directors and the SOD List-Serve.

Fund Raising 2006: Ray McBride and Denis Brodner fund-raised for the OAPF and managed the SOD Booth at the both the OCIA AGMM and the Upper Midwest Organic Conference in March in Lacrosse, Wisconsin. Arnold Taylor also attended both the "Upper Midwest Organic Conference in Wisconsin and the OCIA AGMM, as well as the Guelph Conference, and he and Cathy Holtslander attended a fundraiser on July 14 for the legal action hosted by Community Natural Foods in Calgary. Costs for attending these events were kept down by piggy backing with attendance at other events. For example OCIA paid for Arnold's airfare to Wisconsin as he was also attending the OCIA AGMM. In past years members of the OAPF committee have also attended the Guelph and the COABC Conferences as fund raising opportunities. For instance in February 2004, Arnold was guest dinner speaker at the COABC (Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia) annual meeting, and spoke on the formation of the OAPF and the class action lawsuit. COABC funded the trip expenses and turned the substantial proceeds of a silent auction over to the OAPF.

The OAPF Committee donated a copy of David Suzuki's DVD to the "Turning the Tide Video Library" in Saskatoon. Turning the Tide is an alternative bookstore and lends and does free public screenings of films and videos which are of social interest, and concerned with creating just and sustainable societies.

A grad student from Wisconsin doing research on the effects of genetic research on organic operations interviewed OAPF committee members Marc Loiselle, Cathy Holtslander, Arnold Taylor and Doug Bone in July. She also interviewed several SOD Board members.

The OAPF has made an effort to get quarterly updates on the legal action into the COG magazine, the CEN affiliate newsletters and French updates (written by Marc Loiselle), into Quebec.

Marc Loiselle (OAPF Communications and Research Director), continues as a representative to the Variety Registration Committee. At the February 2004 PRRCG ('Prairie Registration Recommending Committee for Grain') meeting, as a full voting member of the 'Wheat-Rye-Triticale Subcommittee', Marc was able to convince committee colleagues to address concerns about Round-Up Ready wheat test plots. Marc's work as an RM Councilor (Rural Municipality of Grant #372), gave him the opportunity to introduce a motion (passed by 292 of 297 delegates at the March 2003 Annual Convention), that SARM lobby Ag & Ag Food Canada, and the CFIA to disclose GMO wheat test plot locations and to stop confined field testing of GMO wheat.

The OAPF has budgeted up to \$5000 per year for its lobbying efforts. SOD-OAPF has been continuously active in lobbying against GE crops and food, as one part of the 'Stop GE Wheat Canada' working group, along with the NFU, Greenpeace, Council of Canadians, Oxfam, and the Canadian Health Coalition. Over the last several years, besides the extensive lobbying, Marc has written numerous articles and done many interviews in both French and English. He has also appeared in several films and videos, and done extensive work translating OAPF documents and communications into French.

The OAPF participated in the international Ban Terminator campaign, which was successful in keeping the world-wide ban on Terminator in place at the UN meeting in Brazil in March 2006, in the face of the Canadian government's support of Terminator technology development.

The OAPF signed on to a multi-NGO position paper critiquing the federal government's handling of new substances (ie. GMO's) in July 2006.

Cathy Holtslander attended the National Forum on Seed working group meeting on behalf of SOD in April 2006, where changes to the variety registration system were being discussed. Her report of that meeting was sent to the SOD Directors.

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### **The New SOD List-Serve.**

A motion by Doug Bone/Cathy Holtslander to establish a public list-serve for people interested in Saskatchewan organics was passed at the 2006 SOD AGM. At Cathy's suggestion the list service provider is "rise up.net". This provider caters to socially progressive groups and charges no fee, but does accept donations. The SOD List-serve has been functioning since early this spring. The benefits include outreach and membership building, promoting transparency, facilitating communication between all organic producers and organic supporters, etc. It can put a face on Saskatchewan organics both nationally and internationally. The goal is to get the majority of the organic community (you need not be a SOD member to join) in Saskatchewan signed on and participating. A link to join the list-serve is available on the SOD website at [www.saskorganic.com](http://www.saskorganic.com)

### **SOD participation in the 'Seeds of Doubt' tour against the introduction of GMO wheat.**

The 'Seeds of Doubt' tour made a series of public presentations focusing on the dangers of genetic contamination from confined field trials and the commercial release of genetically engineered wheat. It began in Winnipeg in February 2003, and traveled across western Canada. The OAPF committee participated with other groups (NFU, Council of Canadians, and Parkland Institute) in planning and conducting this series of meetings which ultimately helped in pressuring Monsanto to suspend development and open field trials of its GMO wheat in May 2004.

### **SOD participation in the 'Canadian Biotechnology Action Network'.**

Cathy Holtslander has been involved in organizing the new national umbrella group for anti-GMO work, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. On behalf of SOD she attended two organizing meetings in Ottawa in 2006 and has been serving on the interim Steering Committee since April. She attended CBAN's founding AGM in October 2006.

### **SOD Support for Release of the 'Seeds of Doubt' Video.**

The OAPF Committee wrote a letter to the administration of the University of Manitoba, requesting that the apparent suppression of the film "Seeds of Doubt" by Dr. Stephane McLachlan, Ian Mauro, and Jim Sanders be ended, and that the producers of this film be allowed to distribute it as they saw fit. The letter also expressed the view that it is the responsibility and the mandate of universities to allow research on public issues, such as the implications of genetic engineering, to be freely accessible by the public. It further stated that university autonomy must not be compromised by government under-funding, or the resulting over-participation and influence of private for profit companies. Copies of this letter were also sent to the Prime Minister and other federal and provincial government officials. Following a large amount of protest, the U of M administration did allow for the distribution of the film.

In November of 2005, Arnold Taylor joined Ian Mauro and Stephane McLachlin in the launching tour of their Seeds of Doubt video, at a fund raiser for the OAPF at Simon Frazer University.

### **A new SOD President.**

Doug Bone was elected President of SOD on October 26, following the resignation of Don Kizlyk for personal reasons. Doug has served as first vice-president of SOD for two years, and has been a member of SOD's Organic Agriculture Protection Fund Committee since its inception in 2001. Doug and his wife Faye Atkinson have been farming organically since 1997 on their farm near Elrose, Saskatchewan.

SOD expressed our appreciation for Don's service, commitment and dedication to the organization during his term as President. Don continues to serve on the SOD Board representing his organic producer organization.

### **SOD Committees**

Financial/Sustainability: Victor Hupaelo (chair), Norm Bromm, Lester Wyatt, Keith Neu, Ray McBride, Elmer Laird

Research: Dayton Funk (chair), Gerry Metrunc, Bob Willick, Doug Wagner, Marc Loiselle, Cal Cowan, Mike Kasper, Rob Stafford, Norm Bromm, Ken Stull, Brenda Frick (advisor)

Policy/Procedures: Cathy Holtslander (chair), Doug Bone, Denis Brodner, Bill Rees, Mike Kasper

Communications/Promotions: Al Boyko (chair), Rob Stafford, Gerry Metrunc, Joan Harrison, Dave Cook, Brenda Frick, Doug Bone, Jennifer Bromm, David Orchard, Lester Wyatt

Nominations: Denis Brodner (chair), Doug Bone, Al Boyko, Arnold Taylor, Rob Stafford

OAPF: Arnold Taylor (chair), Doug Bone, Cathy Holtslander, Marc Loiselle, Larry Hoffman, Mike Kasper, Norm Bromm, Lester Wyatt, Jennifer Bromm, Maggie Mumm, Dale Beaudoin, Advisors: Mary Beckie, Debbie Miller, Wally Hamm

Website: Cathy Holtslander (chair), John Yates, Lester Wyatt, Arnold Taylor (advisor)

Production Manual: Debbie Miller (chair), Norm Bromm, Blaine Reckseidler, Joan Harrison

Prairie Ursuline Centre/Learning Needs: Arnold Taylor (chair), Don Kizlyk, Lester Wyatt

Personnel: Cathy Holtslander (chair), Debbie Miller, Don Kizlyk

Organic Forum/Project Funding Steering Committee: Don Kizlyk, Doug Bone

Premier's Meeting: Doug Bone (chair), Dayton Funk, Don Kizlyk, Pauline Ziehl-Grimsrud, Arnold Taylor, Debbie Miller

Signing Authorities: two of President, Administrator, Treasurer

### SOD Directors 2006

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