Pig slaughtered to protest death of family farms in NB

By REBEKA FRAZER-CHASSON

It wasn’t your regular Saturday morning at the Dieppe Farmer’s Market. As vendors and customers gathered inside the market on December 5th, an old one ton truck stood in the parking lot with a sign on its side that read “La ferme familiale crée la fête.” The family farm is dying.” As the back doors opened, journalists flocked to watch the slaughter of a pig inside the truck.

Jean-Eudes Chasson, President of the New Brunswick division of the National Farmers Union, New Brunswick and Killan, ended the life of one of his pigs and then publicly butchered it. Chasson, of R进程, admits to being extremely nervous before and during the protest. Once the pig was down, he looked to the journalists and said, “no one does this for pleasure, no one.”

He spoke of his protest as a response to the feeling of having nowhere to go in the face of the inefficaciousness and inability of conventional politics to address the issue. During the protest, he spoke of the enduring plight of the family farm and the protest and federal government’s failure to effectively respond to the crisis. After the 40-minute protest, Chasson spoke to journalists about the necessity of closing the gap between farmers and the public. In the past, farmers have struggled to see more people educated on where food comes from, conditions under which food is grown, and how our food system operates, the local environment.

Chasson criticized the government programs that are aimed at helping farmers but really only increase the debt of farmers. Referring to the Hog Farm Transition Program and Growing Forward government initiatives, Chasson said, “on one hand you have the federal government that is giving money to farmers and on the other hand you have the provincial government encouraging production.”

Chasson pointed out that some remaining small-scale producers can survive by selling their products at farmers markets, but this is only helpful to those who are good at marketing. Chasson believes farmers need to come together to establish a cooperative to manage prices and competition so family farmers can share in the deal directly and also through the viability of the deal outside of the province.

Reactions to the protest were mixed. Some were in favor of the protest, while others were critical that no one was attacking the source of our food; others were disgusted and felt that the market was not the place for such a spectacle. Paul Gagnon, Dieppe market supplier and former pig farmer, spoke Chasson’s hand. “The point of farmers’ market is to bring the farm to the city. And that’s what Chasson was doing in the back of his truck.”

As Chasson cleaned up and split the pig in two, Den Cunha of the House of Natives, a Moncton refuge for homeless men and women, pulled up in his van. Half of the pig was given as a symbol of solidarity to the home. Cunha said it was important to be in solidarity with the farmers. Chasson feels that some of the outcomes of any of his actions may be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the food security committee of the provincial government. Jean Brady, NFU National Women’s President, on the other hand, said, “I think that it is not a choice he made lightly. He is an extreme libertarian and believes that the family hog farmers to the attention of the government. Stated Brady, “as a result of ensuring that there is knowledge and reliance on the land are the best ways of agriculture for a sustainable and reliable food supply for the future.”

Brady, a farmer in St. Andrews, added, “in some areas of Canada, you have farmers who have been devastated enough to take their own lives. The result of which is that you can’t talk to them about something that they can’t even imagine seeing something to see that they can’t even imagine happening. Brady pointed out that food production is not just a farm issue, it is an issue for anyone who eats.

New Brunswickers are in a state of crisis. President of the New Brunswick division of the National Farmers Union, Jean-Eudes Chasson, slaughtered one of his pigs at the Dieppe Farmers’ Market in December to protest government’s failure to address the many difficulties faced by farmers. Photo by Rebeka Frazer-Chasson.

At the 40th annual convention of the NFU in Ottawa two weeks ago, Chasson issued a call for action to farmers from across Canada.

The NFU, established in 1969, works toward the development of economic and social policies that will maintain the family farm as the primary food-producing unit in Canada. The NFU in New Brunswick is one of two accredited general farm organizations in the province, serving farmers from all commodity groups.

Media expert exposes the marketing of NB Power sale

New Brunswickers gathered outside the Delta Beauvoir in Moncton on December 9th to protest the proposed sale of NB Power to Hydro Quebec. The protest took place in conjunction with a forum organized by the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. The conference featured presentations by labour, environmental, policy, and media experts, including Mount Allison professor, Erin Steuter. Steuer broke down the techniques that are being used to market the sale of the public utility to a resistant public. Photo by Julie Michaud.

By JULIE MICHAUD

The province of New Brunswick has the services of international public relations firm, Hill and Knowlton, to help convince New Brunswickers to support the proposed sale of NB Power to Hydro Quebec. This province is notorious for its work on a wide variety of unethical campaigns including selling the Gulf War to the American public, disrupting the carcinogenicity of cigarettes, and greasing our hands with the oil industry. At a recent conference in Moncton, Mount Allison University professor, Erin McNeely, discussed some of the marketing strategies that are being used by the government.

1. Glittering generalities - Create positive associations with the deal by using glossy words and phrases that do not have any real meaning.

2. Us vs. them - Associate those who raise legitimate concerns with those who believe that Hydro Quebec will tear out the Maritimes Dam and flood everyone living downstream. Suggest that people who believe anything other than the plan for NB Power’s debt to consumer public, that the government has talked about the various concerns of the people of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland as public meetings. This is just one of the ways that there are various interest groups - meaning the working people of New Brunswick.

3. A folk tale - Tell a story that makes the people concerned with the deal think they have to act now.

4. Transfer technique - Transfer popular values to the deal whether they fit or not. In this case there has really been a sort of a greenwashing in which this is supposed to be a good deal for the environment when that’s not the case.

5. The testimonial - Bring out Frank McKeown and prominent voices to express opinions about NB Power, the public. “Of course this has been a very important issue for the innings, so the innings have come out strongly in support of the real people.”

6. The face to face - Use simple language to describe a complex deal. “They’re referred to as our neighbours.”

7. The policy - Use the language of the province to mean the same thing as the province. “This province is being sold to Hydro Quebec.”

8. The foundation - Create a base of support for the deal. NB Power’s debt to the public is an important issue for the innings, so the innings have come out strongly in support of the real people.”

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