



Niagara Federation of Agriculture Member Update



November 1, 2019

Dear Members:

On January 1, 1970, 12 Niagara area municipal and one regional government replaced 2 counties and 26 municipal structures which existed under the Welland and Lincoln County structures.

On October 30, 2019, (almost fifty years later), Niagara North Federation of Agriculture (NNFA) and Niagara South Federation of Agriculture (NSFA) members in attendance at their respective annual meetings, voted to amalgamate the two Federations into one strong voice for Niagara agriculture.

Why did Niagara North and South Federations investigate an amalgamation?

This move was first initiated as a result of a motion passed at the 2018 annual meetings of both Federations calling for a committee to be formed to study the advantages and disadvantages of the two Federations joining into one voice.

Most local Federations match the structure of local government. Niagara has functioned as a region for some time, so the goal is that a joint Federation will be a stronger and more cohesive voice to local government.

Who oversaw these changes?

A committee was formed with members drawn from NNFA and NSFA boards of directors. The initial discussion meeting was facilitated by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and subsequent planning meetings were supported by staff of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA). The amalgamation committee drafted updated documents and recommendations which they presented to the membership of each Federation at their Annual General Meeting held on October 30, 2019. (Should also be noted that both Niagara North and South boards of directors had the opportunity to review the progress of the amalgamation committee throughout the process and their suggestions and recommendations were always taken into consideration by the amalgamation committee. Both boards endorsed the final recommendations)

When will the changes take place?

After additional discussions, the members present at each annual meeting passed the recommendation to amalgamate and the new **Niagara Federation of Agriculture will take effect on January 1st, 2020.** In the meantime, the current boards and executives will remain in their positions.

What will change for members?

Most members will not notice any significant changes. Farmers' interests will still be represented by farmers elected from across the Niagara region. Members of the OFA who farm in Niagara will still be members of both the provincial and the regional organization.

How are members being represented differently?

The amalgamation committee has determined that members should be represented by those farmers who are interested in advocating for farm business at all levels of government, regardless of what commodity they produce, and what township they reside in. In order to promote diversity within the board, a nominating committee was tasked with the aim to recruit from a wide range of farmers across geography, demographic and commodity, as board positions are being filled each year.

Why is the board set at 12 members?

The amalgamation committee discussed the ideal number for an involved and engaged board. Larger boards tend to take longer to reach consensus, and smaller boards tend to demand a lot of time and energy of fewer people. After reviewing board structures from different organizations across the province, the number 12 was suggested as it allows for a moderate-sized board that allows the most involved and interested farmers to be engaged and active.

Who are my new Niagara Federation of Agriculture Directors?

Murray Bering	Joe Kita
Clarke Fretz	Chris Mullet Koop
Linda Grimo	Jim Morrison
Rose Marie Haegens	Joyce Sonneveld
Chris Hamilton	Arden Vaughn
Ian Johnston	Albert Witteveen

Policy Advisory Council Members: Ted Hessels, Robert Bator, Mike Chechalk
Executive members will be elected by the board of directors.

What is new in the constitution?

The objectives of the joint Federation will remain common:

- developing and consolidating farmer opinions for the betterment of the agriculture industry
- bringing Niagara farmer concerns to the OFA and sharing OFA policy to members in the region
- Facilitating the spread of industry information to all farmers in the region

One new objective is being considered:

- To expand the current programs to promote and educate the public about the practices and benefits of the local agriculture sector through the use of various communication strategies and organization of events.

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Draft Logo for Niagara Federation of Agriculture

