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The Seeds Planted With an OTF Grant Have Taken Root



This past Saturday, FAW welcomed Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal, as well as Dr. Ramesh Makhija, an [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) [1] (OTF) volunteer, and Mayor of Selwyn Township, Mary Smith, to Rocky Lane Farm to learn about our achievements, and to formally recognize and thank OTF for their generous support over the last three years.

In 2012, FAW received a three-year, \$192,300 grant to develop innovative programs that would help to revitalize rural agricultural communities in east central Ontario. While at the farm on Saturday, MPP Leal and Dr. Makhija had the chance to learn more about FAW's Sheep Farming Mentorship Program.

"The OTF funding to Farms at Work has provided important opportunities for local farmers and farmland owners" said MPP Leal. "It has allowed them to work together to increase farmland stewardship and make on-farm environmental improvements. I am pleased our government has partnered with Farms at Work to attract new farmers to our region and allow agriculture to remain an important economic contributor to our local communities."

FAW's mission is to promote healthy and active farmland in east central Ontario, a region that has seen long-term declines in the numbers of farmers and farm businesses. Since 2009, we have worked to reverse these trends, by providing high quality training and business development opportunities for new farmers, as well as programs to help established farmers and non-farming land owners achieve stewardship goals on their land.

"This OTF grant has made it possible for us to accomplish ground-breaking work over the past three years" said Pat Learmonth, Director of Farms at Work. "Today, we are seeing this in action as Bob and Gail Irvine work with 7 participants in this year's Sheep Farming Mentorship, which has drawn farmers from as far away as Waterloo and St Mary's, ON."

By the end of the 2015 season, more than 50 "mentees" will have completed an FAW Mentorship in either [Beekeeping](#) [2], [Sheep Farming](#) [3], or [Pasture Management](#) [4]. With the expansion of their



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initial model (beekeeping) to now include other types of farming, FAW has been approached by commodity organizations interested in rolling programs out in other areas of the province. Starting this fall, the new [Maple Syrup Production Mentorship](#) [5] will be held near Campbellford (registration now open).

Farms at Work (FAW) was founded in 2009 as a charitable project on [Tides Canada's](#) [6] shared platform, which supports on-the-ground efforts to create uncommon solutions for the common good. Tides Canada is a national Canadian charity dedicated to a healthy environment, social equity, and economic prosperity.

A leading grantmaker in Canada, the [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) [7] strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities.



Source URL: <http://farmsatwork.com/news/seeds-planted-otf-grant-have-taken-root>

Links

[1] <http://www.otf.ca> [2] <http://farmsatwork.ca/beekeeping-mentorship-program> [3] <http://farmsatwork.ca/sheep-mentorship-program> [4] <http://www.farmsatwork.ca/pasture-management-mentorship-program> [5] <http://farmsatwork.ca/maple-syrup-mentorship-program> [6] <http://tidescanada.org/> [7] <http://www.otf.ca/>