

# Breaking Bread

Fall 2009 Newsletter



## Does it make a difference?

A visit to Bangladesh, five years later

How do I know my donation is having an impact?" That's the most common question donors ask non-profit organizations, and rightly so. We want to know that our donations are improving the future for others, even if we will never meet those people.

Though we believe projects supported by Canadian Foodgrains Bank with your donations make a difference, we don't always have a chance to witness the changes or determine whether the short term changes from a project are sustained in the long term.

Recently, however, Rob Finlay, program officer for Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and Norman Holbrook, program officer for our member agency World Relief Canada, had a unique opportunity to visit a region in Bangladesh five years after a project had been completed. What they witnessed convinced them that this project has had a long term positive impact on the lives of the project participants.

The Gopalganj district in the South-Western zone of Bangladesh is an area prone to flooding. Frequent floods have filled the canal systems with silt, leaving fields water-logged and without proper drainage. With funding from the World Relief Canada account at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Koinonia (an organization based in Bangladesh which partners with World Relief Canada) runs a project in which landless day labourers are paid through food-for-work to excavate the canals. This provides drainage during the monsoon season and irrigation during the dry season. Labourers receive rice for their work during the short-term, proper drainage increases yield (during Monsoon season), irrigation makes fields available for a second cropping season each year (during dry season), and transportation for people and crops is improved (by boat along the canal and by foot and automobile along the roadways that have been raised by the dirt excavated the canals). Following the food-for-work season each spring, participants also receive training to help diversify their sources of income.

**END HUNGER** 

Canal excavation in Gopalganj

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian church-based agencies working to end hunger in developing countries by increasing and deepening the involvement of Canadians in efforts to end hunger; supporting partnerships and activities to reduce hunger on both an immediate and sustainable basis; and influencing changes in public policies necessary to end hunger:

### Member Agencies

Adventist Development and Relief Agency Canada [www.adra.ca](http://www.adra.ca) • Canadian Baptist Ministries [www.cbmin.org](http://www.cbmin.org) • Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org) • Canadian Lutheran World Relief [www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org) • Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada [www.cmacan.org](http://www.cmacan.org) • Christian Reformed World Relief Committee [www.crwrc.org](http://www.crwrc.org) • Emergency Relief & Development Overseas (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) [www.erdo.ca](http://www.erdo.ca) • Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada [www.emcc.ca](http://www.emcc.ca) • Mennonite Central Committee Canada [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org) • Nazarene Compassionate • Ministries Canada [www.ncmc.ca](http://www.ncmc.ca) • Presbyterian World Service & Development [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca) • Primate's World Relief & Development Fund (Anglican Church of Canada) [www.pwrdf.org](http://www.pwrdf.org) • The Salvation Army [www.salvationarmy.ca](http://www.salvationarmy.ca) • The United Church of Canada [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) • World Relief Canada [www.wrcanada.org](http://www.wrcanada.org)



Five years after the initial project, Norman and Rob were impressed with what they saw. “We arrived in the Spring (dry season) when the locals were picking tonnes of watermelons and shipping them to wholesalers for shipment all over Bangladesh,” said Rob. “They’re making good money for a winter cash-crop that they couldn’t grow before.”

“During the Monsoon season, their township used to be like a big swamp and only a low quality and low yielding variety of rice would grow,” adds Norman, “giving yields about 500 kg/hectare. Now that the canals are providing proper drainage, they’re getting over 3 tonnes/hectare for just the monsoon crop. A lot more food is available in the region and farmers are getting ahead financially. Even the landless labourers are happy as they are traditionally paid 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the crop and with higher yields and two crops a year, their wages go up considerably.”



Bhabon Ballav is one of the farmers who has benefited from this project. Before severe flooding a number of years ago, Ballav and his family owned about 2 hectares of land. Due to economic hardships they were forced to sell almost half their land. The family managed to survive on a winter crop from the small farm and the meager

wages Ballav received as a labourer at other times of the year, but things were especially difficult between August and October when there was little to no work.

Since the project was completed, Ballav stated “we get about 3 times what we got before and last year in this township from our big cash crop of watermelons alone, we earned about \$3.5 million!” Due to increased income, Ballav now has almost 3 hectares of land, plus he rents some, and the land is much more valuable as he can get 2 or 3 crops per year.

Speaking with a staff person from Koinonia, Ballav said, contentedly, “now our family is much more financially stable and food secure. Even if there were a natural disaster, we would be able to survive.”

“It’s certainly good to see the sustained long-term impact,” said Norman Holbrook after his visit to the region. “Hearing stories from people like Ballav makes our work through Canadian Foodgrains Bank seem even more important.”

**Note:** If you are interested in learning more about hunger and the way our members and partners are responding in India and Bangladesh, consider joining our Food Study Tour to the region in late January, early February. Contact James Kornelsen, Public Engagement Coordinator, for more information.

—Heather Plett, *Director of Resources & Public Engagement*

## Sharing your talents in service to others

John Bosomworth says he isn't sure he has any talents. Over the past 20 years, he and Eunice have been just collecting "stuff". He enjoys the excitement of the search, the fun of friendly dickering, hours in the shop restoring, and preserving history for future generations.

John and Eunice farm near Ayton Ontario, where they raised their four children. John's interest in antique farm equipment became a hobby and the rest is history, literally.

Today, despite the fact that John and Eunice are too modest to admit it, their incredible collection has more than 100 John Deere tractors, several dozen walking plows and horses, more than 30 stationary engines, numerous wagons, Chrysler and Chev cars, cream separators, and various other pieces of equipment including hundreds of neatly displayed hand tools.

In 2006, Eunice's sister, the late Mary Lou Holiday, encouraged them to host an event as a fundraiser for the CFGB. John wondered, "Who would come to see their old stuff?" With six local growing projects pitching in to help, the one

day event raised more than \$13,000 from free will donations and a lunch booth.

This spring, despite health concerns, John and Eunice were willing to try again. "If we could possibly help others and support the CFGB, then we should try and do it" said John, but again he wondered who would come. On an overcast August 29<sup>th</sup>, more than 1400 visitors signed the guest book, viewed his immense collection housed in 5 sheds and barns, enjoyed the music and ate sausage on a bun and homemade pies. Churches from six denominations helped out and raised over \$21,000.

Just as the show was over, there was a short shower, followed by a double rainbow - one for John and one for Eunice. Harold Fisher, one of the organizers said of the rainbow on this memorable day, "perhaps this was God showing his blessing on this event". May John and Eunice be as blessed as they have been a blessing to others.

—David & Kathryn Mayberry, Ontario Coordinators



In the weeks leading up to Halloween, the student council spends a day with Wayne Alford, a farmer with a seed business, who provides them with wheat that the students help put in bags. A stand is set up in the hallway of the school and the bags of wheat are sold for \$2 per bag. All students are encouraged to participate.

In the afternoon of October 31 students dress up in their costumes and gather by the school with their bicycles or wagons, horses or old cars and their bags of wheat. Then, with a police and fire truck escort, the parade heads off for the one mile trek through the town to the elevator. Once there, the grain is donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and students celebrate with donuts and drinks provided by the elevator.

Would your school be interested in a MOGA event? Consider celebrating Valentine's Day by showing God's love to those in the world who are hungry.

—Harold Penner, Manitoba Coordinator

## MOGA at Swan Valley Regional Secondary School

SVRSS has a unique way of celebrating the 31st day of October each year. The event is known as MOGA, for Most Outrageous Group Activity, an annual event that has raised hunger awareness as well as thousands of dollars for the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank over 20 years.

The Principal of the school, Henry Barkowski, believes this Halloween activity helps students learn and have fun at the same time. Every year he encourages the new student council to take on the responsibility and make it happen again.



*Jim Cornelius with Minister Bev Oda and World Food Programme representative David Stevenson at recent CIDA announcement.*

## Canadian International Development Agency Unveils Food Security Strategy

Good news! CIDA has announced its new food security strategy, and it places the needs of hungry people front and centre. On World Food Day (October 16), CIDA Minister Bev Oda came to Winnipeg and joined the Executive Director of the Foodgrains Bank, Jim Cornelius, to announce the three pillars of the food security strategy: food aid and nutrition, sustainable agricultural development, and research and innovation. Her announcement follows the recent statements that food security would be central to CIDA's work, and that Canada would invest an additional \$600 million over three years.

This announcement does not mean any more money for the Foodgrains Bank itself, but it does signify a significant shift in focus for Canada's international work on food and agriculture.

Supporters and staff of the Foodgrains Bank have long recognized the need for more investment for small farmers in developing countries. Our Public Policy team led the effort to deliver this message to the government of Canada, and many constituents added their voices. The food security strategy just announced will go a long way to addressing this need. For example, CIDA has committed to double investment in sustainable agriculture, and double its investment in the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which aims to improve smallholder farmers' access to knowledge, financial services, land, water and technology.

While the minister announced some details of the food security strategy, the complete strategy has not yet been released to the public. To date, we don't know if CIDA is taking any significant steps to address some of our key concerns, such as focusing on the needs of rural women, helping poor people adapt to climate change, and supporting malnutrition prevention work. The Public Policy team will continue to dialogue with CIDA and advocate for inclusion of these concerns.

—Paul Hagerman, *Public Policy Manager*



### From the desk of the Executive Director The Need for Food Aid

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is sometimes criticized for supplying food aid to households and communities. The critics suggest that food aid is simply a 'charity' response that can create dependencies. They suggest that we should be focusing on longer-term solutions instead. We agree that food aid is only a partial solution and insufficient to address long-term needs. Nevertheless we are persuaded that food aid is an important part of the solution when combined with other actions.

The consequences of not addressing immediate hunger and malnutrition are serious. The physiological effects of hunger and malnutrition affect people's health, ability to learn, and energy for work. Households facing food shortages are often forced to take short-term actions to meet their immediate food needs that compromise their longer-term food security and health, such as selling productive assets, borrowing from loan sharks, reducing expenditures on health needs, and taking children out of school.

As the world wrestles with the recent sharp increase in the number of hungry people globally and looks for solutions, it is increasingly recognized that the solution must include both strengthening food production and people's livelihoods in the longer-term combined with programs to ensure households have access to the food they need in the short-term.

The Foodgrains Bank program includes both immediate food assistance and efforts to enable households to feed themselves in the longer-term. We are also pleased to see that the new food security strategy announced by the Canadian government includes both components as an essential part of their strategy.

**Jim Cornelius**, *Executive Director*

# Voices from the South

## Mary Beth Senate

Mary Beth Senate works as the Chief Functionary/Secretary for the Rural Women's Upliftment Society (RWUS) in India. With funding from Canadian Foodgrains Bank through our member agency World Relief Canada, she heads up the Manipur Food Security Project which is focused on sustainable agriculture in the uplands. They use a method referred to as "sloping agriculture land technology" (SALT) to help farmers grow nitrogen-fixing trees to enrich the soil and prevent soil erosion. Between the rows of trees on the sides of hills, fruit, rice, and vegetables are grown. They also promote "FAITH" gardening (food always in the home) which promotes the use of composting to plant vegetables in small kitchen gardens.



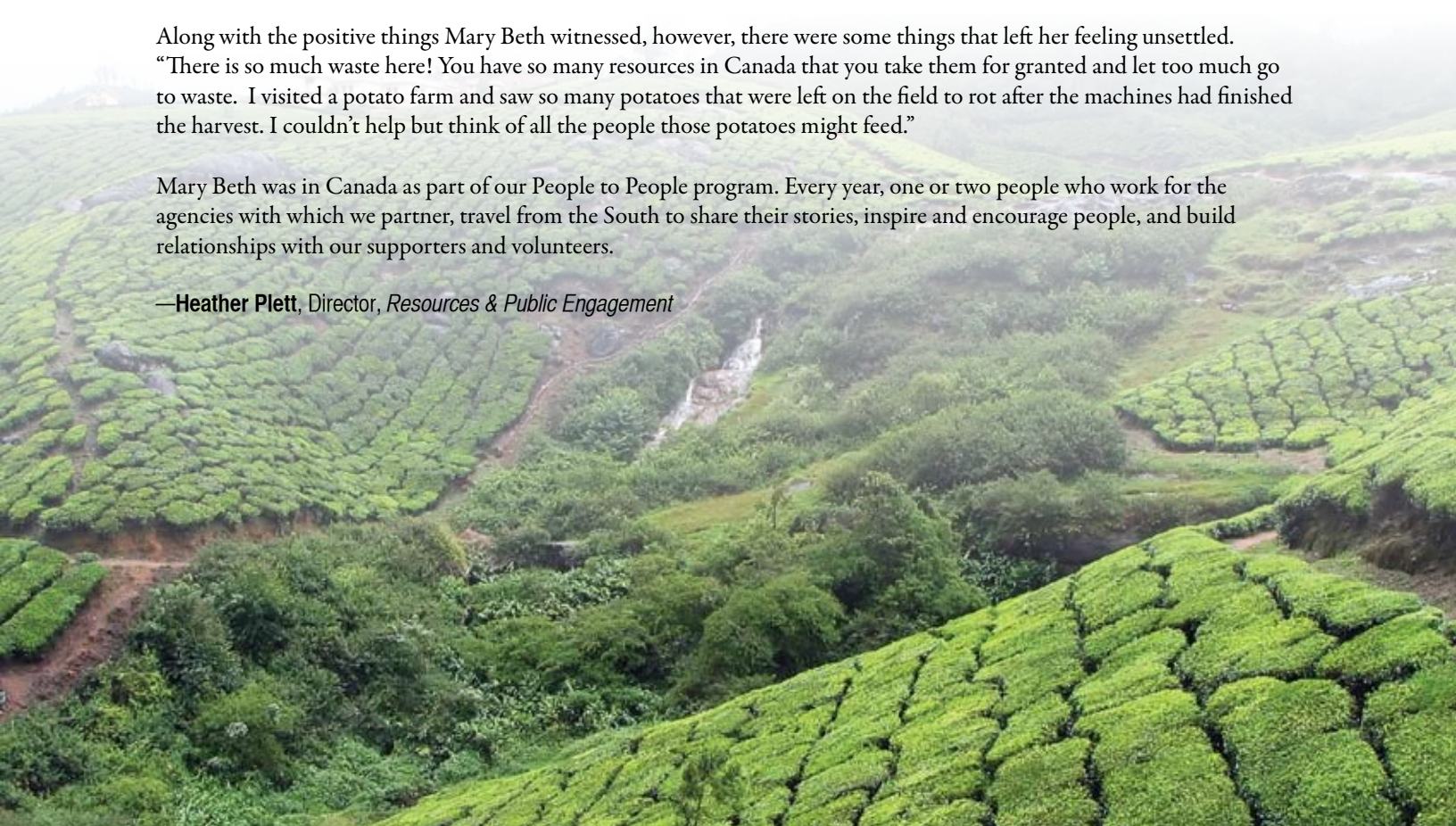
When I asked Mary Beth why she left a career in teaching to work in agricultural development work, she recounted a story of a time when ethnic conflict broke out in her region. When members of the persecuted tribes had to flee or go into hiding to avoid violence, she helped them by doing their marketing for them, sheltering them, and bringing them food. This awakened a passion for helping marginalized people, and soon she was working as a community coordinator for RWUS.

Mary Beth had just completed a month of traveling in Ontario, visiting Foodgrains Bank supporters and volunteers when I had a chance to sit down with her. I asked her to share a few of her impressions of Canada. Her first response was "it's a very fortunate country. There is such an abundance of water, food, and other resources compared to what we have at home." While she was traveling and meeting with supporters and volunteers, Mary Beth says she was moved by how much passion people have for helping others. "There are so many generous people giving from their hearts," she said. "People are so committed! In one place I visited, they were collecting pop cans and crushing them to raise money for the Foodgrains Bank! I would never have dreamed that people would go to such effort to raise money for strangers!"

Along with the positive things Mary Beth witnessed, however, there were some things that left her feeling unsettled. "There is so much waste here! You have so many resources in Canada that you take them for granted and let too much go to waste. I visited a potato farm and saw so many potatoes that were left on the field to rot after the machines had finished the harvest. I couldn't help but think of all the people those potatoes might feed."

Mary Beth was in Canada as part of our People to People program. Every year, one or two people who work for the agencies with which we partner, travel from the South to share their stories, inspire and encourage people, and build relationships with our supporters and volunteers.

—Heather Plett, Director, *Resources & Public Engagement*





## Food Aid and Climate Change

Oxfam's recent report entitled 'The Right to Survive' points out that each year about 250 million people are affected by what we call natural disasters. Surprisingly, 98% of those affected are suffering from drought and floods, exactly the kind of events which are expected to become more common as the impacts of climate change increase. Furthermore, the number of people affected by such disasters is expected to rise, perhaps by as much as 50% in just six years (2015). This rapid increase reflects both the increasing frequency of these events as well as the growing vulnerability of people in places like the slums in many large cities in developing countries.

This clearly has direct implications for the need for food assistance. It is exactly these kinds of events that not only disrupt people's lives and livelihoods but also cause the loss of local food supply, the crops, fish and animals. Even now in the wake of the current financial/economic crisis, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) is finding itself critically short of food for food assistance. Furthermore, when the economic crisis eases and more food/money may become available, it is almost certain that rising needs will outstrip the available response.

Climate change and climate change-related disasters will hit some regions harder than others. Food production in parts of sub-Saharan Africa may drop by as much as 50% over the next decade. This has implications for the possibility of providing food obtained locally or in the region. If there are no surplus crops available in the region, it may be vital that we can provide food from countries like Canada.

Much can be done to improve this outlook. Local communities and governments in the most affected countries can implement disaster preparedness plans to reduce the damage. Rich countries can honour the requests of developing countries to provide additional funding to help with climate change adaptation.

The effects of climate change on global food security are expected to be large. Adequate food assistance resources will become increasingly important.

—Stuart Clark, *Senior Policy Advisor*



## Food Study Tour Reunion— After 10 years

We don't communicate with each other every day, but every year, for a few days, sometime between January 30 and February 20 a flurry of emails bounces across the country, from New Brunswick to Alberta, with a copy to Sam VanderEnde in Ethiopia.

The electronic conversation is always inspired by my thought, "Where were we at this moment X years ago. (The year we went on the study tour.)" It has been our way of keeping the collective memory alive.

This year, someone inspired a conversation that kept us in touch more than previous years. This was our tenth anniversary, and we needed to come together to celebrate.

A decade ago, nine of us, with Sam as our guide, traveled through Ethiopia and Kenya on the 1999 Canadian Foodgrains Bank Food Study Tour of East Africa. Most of us have kept in touch because of a very special bond. Why? We can only speculate. Particular personalities? The fact that each of us left our hearts in Ethiopia? The common, dramatic and unique experience of the war? Maybe just because.

Through the magic of the internet we organized a face to face reunion. Dates were set, location decided (Winnipeg because it is central and CFGB "headquarters"), and travel arrangements booked.

On August 19, six of the original nine landed on Sharon's doorstep. Immediately I felt as though we had never been apart. My first thought after smiles, greetings and hugs was, we will be friends as long as we live. The rest of the evening was taken up with "do you remember the day..." and "where was that picture taken?"

CFGB was welcoming and accommodating. We were treated to a warm welcome that felt like a home-coming. To better educate ourselves on food security issues locally, we toured the north end of Winnipeg, visiting community gardens. We were updated on the activities of CFGB to be better prepared to share the good news of its work.

We were all changed by our Ethiopian experience. Our passion for the elimination of hunger has been lived out in a variety of ways. Les goes back to Ethiopia regularly. Jack was back once as well and is still involved in growing projects. His family now supports a school in Ethiopia instead of exchanging Christmas presents and a few years ago, he travelled to India with his wife to help with the inoculation of young children against polio. Bob still speaks about the experience and promotes CFGB and the projects. Sharon still works for CFGB (a vocation and not just a job). Warren works overseas occasionally as a co-op developer (his next assignment is Cambodia) and is committed to living out his life on his Saskatchewan farm as a heritage seed producer. Like Warren, since our return, I've worked in other countries and at home on hunger issues, and after my return from the food study tour, I was shocked to discover that I was comfortable speaking to congregations in churches about God's love manifested through the work of CFGB. Today, I am a rural parish priest in the Anglican Church of Canada, its representative to the board of CFGB and I speak frequently about the efforts to eliminate hunger.

After polling the others during our time together, it seems that although our faith has not changed, our response to that faith is now focused on living it out in a way that respects all people and drives us to reach out through CFGB to the world in love.

—**Marian Lucas-Jeffries**, board member and Food Study Tour participant

(l to r) Jack Rigby, Les Dunford, Sharon Houle, Marian Lucas-Jeffries, Bob Richardson, and Warren Crossman



**Food and Seed Committed**  
(April 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009)

COUNTRY	TONNES	COMMODITY
Bangladesh	1,092	Rice, Oil, Pulses, Salt
Burundi	790	Maize, Pulses, Seeds
DR Congo	13	Seeds
Ethiopia	3,843	Wheat, Maize, Sorghum, Oil, Pulses, Famix, Seeds
India	648	Rice
Kenya	6,500	Maize, Meal, Oil, Pulses
Laos	130	Rice
Pakistan	2,580	Rice, Wheat Flour, Oil, Pulses, Salt, Sugar, Other
Rwanda	32	Maize Meal, Oil, Pulses, Seed
Sierra Leone	52	Seeds
Sri Lanka	1,053	Rice, Wheat Flour, Oil, Pulses, Salt, Sugar, Other
Sudan	61	Sorghum, Oil, Pulses, Salt, Other, Seeds
Uganda	1,375	Maize Flour, Pulses, Seeds
Zimbabwe	8,361	Maize, Corn Soya Blend, Oil, Pulses

**Food Security and Nutrition Projects Committed**  
(April 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009)

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PROGRAM
Afghanistan	\$453,000	Food Security
Bangladesh	\$63,000	Food Security
DR Congo	\$408,000	Food Security
El Salvador	\$7,000	Food Security
Ethiopia	\$526,000	Food Security
India	\$240,000	Food Security
Iraq	\$420,000	Food Security
Kenya	\$407,000	Food Security
Laos	\$18,000	Food Security
Liberia	\$470,000	Food Security
Malawi	\$112,000	Food Security
Nicaragua	\$268,000	Food Security
Niger	\$207,000	Food Security
Palestine	\$107,000	Food Security
Rwanda	\$67,000	Food Security
Sierra Leone	\$110,000	Food Security
South Africa	\$56,000	Nutrition
Sudan	\$1,070,000	Food Security
Uganda	\$43,000	Food Security
Zambia	\$34,000	Food Security

We welcome your donations in the enclosed envelope, or online at [www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca), or by calling 1-800-665-0377.

Publication  
Mail Agreement  
#40006852

Return undeliverable Canadian mail to: Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Box 767, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2L4



**Head Office**  
Box 767, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2L4  
1-800-665-0377  
204-944-1993  
[www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca)

**British Columbia**  
Clarence & Jenny Tuin  
(604) 855-7208  
[cjtuin@telus.net](mailto:cjtuin@telus.net)

**Ontario**  
David & Kathryn Mayberry  
(519) 485-3642  
[mayberry@xplornet.com](mailto:mayberry@xplornet.com)

**Alberta**  
Andre Visscher & Terence Barg  
Andre (southern): 403-818-2315  
Terence (northern): 780-621-6767  
[alberta@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:alberta@foodgrainsbank.ca)

**Nova Scotia**  
Randy Crozsmann  
(902) 678-2361  
[da.rev@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:da.rev@ns.sympatico.ca)

**Saskatchewan**  
Dave Meier  
(306) 863-2727  
[d.emeier@sasktel.net](mailto:d.emeier@sasktel.net)

**Prince Edward Island**  
Kent Myers  
(902) 969-1058  
[kent@montaguebakery.ca](mailto:kent@montaguebakery.ca)

**Manitoba**  
Harold Penner  
(204) 347-5695  
[harpen@mts.net](mailto:harpen@mts.net)