

Breaking Bread

Spring 2011 Newsletter



END HUNGER

Good News from Pakistan

After a week of visiting with flood-affected families in Pakistan's northern Swat Valley, I was glad to arrive in Karachi, in the south of the country.

It was a welcome change. There was a scent of the sea in the air—everything felt fresh. But I couldn't forget the food aid recipients I had met earlier.

The stories of loss and destruction I heard while in the Swat Valley weighed heavily on me. Those we met were grateful for the food kits they had received, talking about how the food came at a time of great need. But there was an overwhelming sadness in the Valley.

Four months after the floods, many people still did not know how they were going to recover from the disaster. Food aid—like the kits that over 33,300 flood-affected families received through Foodgrains Bank member agencies—is often life saving. But it is not the answer to long term problems. It is meant to tide people over until they can return to providing food for themselves.

But the flooding in Pakistan resulted in 10 million people needing food aid—an enormous number. Plus, there were already many food security issues in the country before the floods hit.

While the floods in Pakistan made the news in Canada for a while, they have long since left our airwaves, and in many cases, our thoughts. But needs still abound in Pakistan. Disasters aren't over when the media goes home. There is always a back story, and life goes on after the west is no longer watching.

But along with the challenges, there was also hope. That is why I had come to Karachi—to follow up on a Foodgrains Bank-funded food security project taking place in Sindh Province through Presbyterian World Service and Development, in partnership with Church World Service. The project was in its third year. Good things were happening.

The villages we visited were poor; the homes were simple and built out of mud. In some cases, there were no formal bathroom facilities. But the villages were filled with vibrancy and energy. People were proud of their achievements through the project and were full of hope for the future.

Although parts of Sindh were devastated by the floods, these project areas were spared. People were excited about the changes that were happening in their villages—in spite of the disaster that was still hanging over their country.

In one small village, made up of about 40 households, both the women and the men had been busy improving their access to healthy food for their families. With the help of project

Continued on next page...



Spring Appeal: Find your envelope inside.

Zihida, a member of the self-help group, used proceeds from the blankets that she made to purchase two goats. She and her family use the milk from the goats. The livestock are a cushion for the future.



staff, the women had organized into a self-help group that acts as a bank, which the women pay into each month. The group then issues loans to members so that they can start small businesses. Many of the women use the loans to buy supplies for embroidery and other crafts.

Zihida, a member of the self-help group, used proceeds from the blankets that she made to purchase two goats. She and her family use the milk from the goats. The livestock are a cushion for the future. Zihida says that being part of the group has given her a sense of belonging. “We’ve learned unity,” she says. “Now we do everything collectively.”

While we were visiting with the women from the village, a group of men were taking part in an agricultural training session. Most of the families in the village rely on farming for their livelihoods. The project is supporting farmers through training workshops and by supplying some inputs such as seeds and fertilizers.

Bio-Neem compost is an organic fertilizer and natural insecticide that is made from the local neem tree. Farmers in the area report it has made their land more fertile, which is important since most farmers have little land to cultivate in the first place, due to a deeply entrenched landlord system. Some years farmers cannot even use all of the land that they do have because there is not enough water for irrigation.

Together with support from the project, the farmers now have access to a water pump that is increasing their cultivation area, and improving food security for their families.

These stories of hope—of families having more access to high quality foods—were in stark contrast to what I had heard in the flood-affected areas of Pakistan. The hard-work and ingenuity of the people in Sindh Province, who are successfully working towards their own food security, is a good news story from Pakistan.

These stories give me hope that those who lost everything in the flood will once again be able to provide for themselves, too.

—Emily Cain, *Communications Officer*

Modern Day Josephs

Have you ever wanted to set a world record?

Five farmers in southwestern Ontario do—they want to set a world record for harvesting 160 acres of soybeans.

The five—Richard Van Donkersgoed, Peter Rastorfer, Mike Koetsier, John Tollenaar and Randy Drenth—have created Harvest for Hunger, a new growing project to raise money for the Foodgrains Bank.

Their goal is to gather as many combines as possible from their local area to harvest the field in under five minutes. It should be something to see!

Setting a world record would be cool. But that's not the main reason the five have created the project.

“Almost a billion people in the developing world don't have enough to eat,” says John. “Here in Canada, we are blessed to be living in a land of bountiful harvests. As Christians first, and farmers second, we believe we should do something to share our abundance with those who are hungry.”

They won't be able to do this alone, of course. They are asking businesses in the Listowel area for help. They are also inviting local farmers to help them harvest the crop—between 100 and 200 combines should do it.

Harvest for Hunger is just one of over 200 growing and community projects across Canada that raise money to help people who are hungry around the world. In addition to the traditional growing projects, where a group of farmers grow a crop and donate the proceeds to the Foodgrains Bank, there are festivals, auctions, concerts and sales of various kinds—there's even a lemonade stand operated by two young people in Saskatchewan.

Altogether, about \$4.5 million is raised each year for the Foodgrains Bank through these efforts, and we are grateful to all who made this possible.



We are also grateful for people like Jacob M. Klassen, who passed away December 28, 2010. J.M., as he was known, was the first execu-

tive director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Under his leadership, the agency was a founder of the Foodgrains Bank in 1983.

I was able to visit J.M. in the hospital a couple of days before he passed away. We spoke about many things, but the one thing that animated him more than anything else was the Foodgrains Bank—its creation continued to be a highlight for him, together with its ongoing success.

Thinking about the various people who make the work of the Foodgrains Bank possible reminds me of how Joseph saved the nation of Egypt from a devastating famine. During years of plenty, he organized efforts to store food so that people would have enough to eat when famine came. His story became a founding principle behind the creation of the Foodgrains Bank.

As in Joseph's time, the world continues to experience hunger, and fluctuations in the production of food and food prices. But today there are thousands of new “Josephs”—people like you, who want to share with those who don't have enough to eat. Not all of us can set a world record along the way, but we can all make a difference in the lives of poor people.

And that's something worth recording.

For more information about Harvest for Hunger, or to get involved with the project, go to foodgrainsbank.ca and click on 'Get Involved.'

—John Longhurst, Director, Resources & Public Engagement





From the desk of the Executive Director Our Supporting Role

The continued generous support from Canadians, churches, companies and the Canadian International Development Agency has enabled the Foodgrains Bank and its member churches to support hungry people in 34 countries over the last ten months.

We have supplied over 29,000 tonnes of food to people suffering from various disasters, conflict, poor governance and chronic hunger. Over 9,000 tonnes of food have been supplied to households affected by the widespread flooding in Pakistan. Food has also been distributed to people suffering from flooding in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Sri Lanka; cyclones in India and the Philippines; drought in Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe; and an earthquake in Haiti.

We have been supporting people affected by conflict; helping with resettlement and recovery programs that enable people to rebuild their lives and feed themselves following, and in the midst of, conflict. These programs have been taking place in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda.

We have also been supporting the efforts of people to feed themselves in contexts of chronic poverty in countries such as Bangladesh, Burundi, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Laos, Malawi, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe.

The nature of our programming support varies from context to context. We work closely with our member churches and partners on the ground as they and local people determine what program is best suited to the situation. More importantly, our partners recognize that the people they are supporting are not helpless victims waiting for solutions to come from the outside. The first people to respond to an emergency are always the people affected. Our job is to support them and their efforts.

With your help, we can give support and hope to hungry people. Your gift to our Spring Appeal will enable us to help even more people around the world. Thanks for making this possible!

—Jim Cornelius, Executive Director

Higher Food Prices Good News for Poor Farmers in Developing World

But volatility makes it harder for farmers to plan for the future and hurts poor consumers

Soaring food prices are bad for poor people—right? Not necessarily, says Stuart Clark, Senior Policy Advisor at Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

“It’s actually good news for small-holder farmers in poor countries, who have often faced farm gate prices below the cost of production due to competition from subsidized imports,” says Clark.

Clark made the comments following recent spikes in food prices—prices that now exceed 2008 levels from the height of the global food crisis.

While acknowledging that high food prices will be a burden for many poor consumers, “the benefits to poor farmers will work their way through local communities,” says Clark.

While farmers in the developing world welcome higher prices, “what isn’t welcome is the very rapid rise in food prices we are seeing now, and saw only three years ago,” he says. “That only adds to the risks for poor farmers.”

Sudden drops in prices are especially problematic for poor farmers, who might have rented more land or planted more crops, based on higher prices, only to see them drop dramatically a year later.

“With limited assets, and no government supports, they’re in trouble if that happens,” Clark observes. What’s needed, he says, “is a way to even out prices, so they stabilize at levels that help poor farmers earn sustainable livings.”

Clark has been participating in Canadian and global discussions about increasing food price volatility, about the implications of this volatility for global and household food security, and what can and should be done about it.

“The questions we should be asking are how to ensure that farmers receive a fair return, while also protecting poor consumers from these rapid price increases,” he says.

—John Longhurst,
Director, Resources
& Public Engagement





Fiddles and Fellowship

For the last eight years, the Frankford, ON Tourist Park has bustled with activity for a weekend in July. That's when 65-70 trailers max out the available space during the annual Fiddlers on the Trent Festival in support of Canadian Foodgrains Bank. And even when the official performances are over—which include fiddlers fiddling from canoes—the park is filled with the sounds of impromptu jam sessions emanating from under the trailer awnings.

“It seemed natural,” said Lois Thompson, when asked how the Fiddlers on the Trent Festival developed as a way to support Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The churches and community in Frankford were already avid supporters of the Foodgrains Bank—the area has a strong history of supporting hungry people around the world through a variety of fundraisers including golf tournaments, yard sales and choral events, explains Lois, former chair of the event. A local farmer, Hugh Fox, cultivates 40 acres of land each year with proceeds from the sale of grain going to the Foodgrains Bank.

The creativity of Tom Walton and Gary Richard, founders of Fiddlers on the Trent, coupled with community support for the Foodgrains Bank, resulted in a unique four-day event filled with fiddles and music from a variety of performers. First held in 2003, the event has raised \$88,000 to help end hunger.

Quality fiddle music is certainly a draw to the event, says Thompson, but the location also helps. Ideally situated between the Trent Canal and the Trent River, the event boasts a pontoon run, great meals, and the opportunity to connect with others camping in the park.

For Carrie Pacey, who serves as a committee member for the festival, the event is both about the fiddle music and the “camaraderie and friendship” she has found with other festival goers.

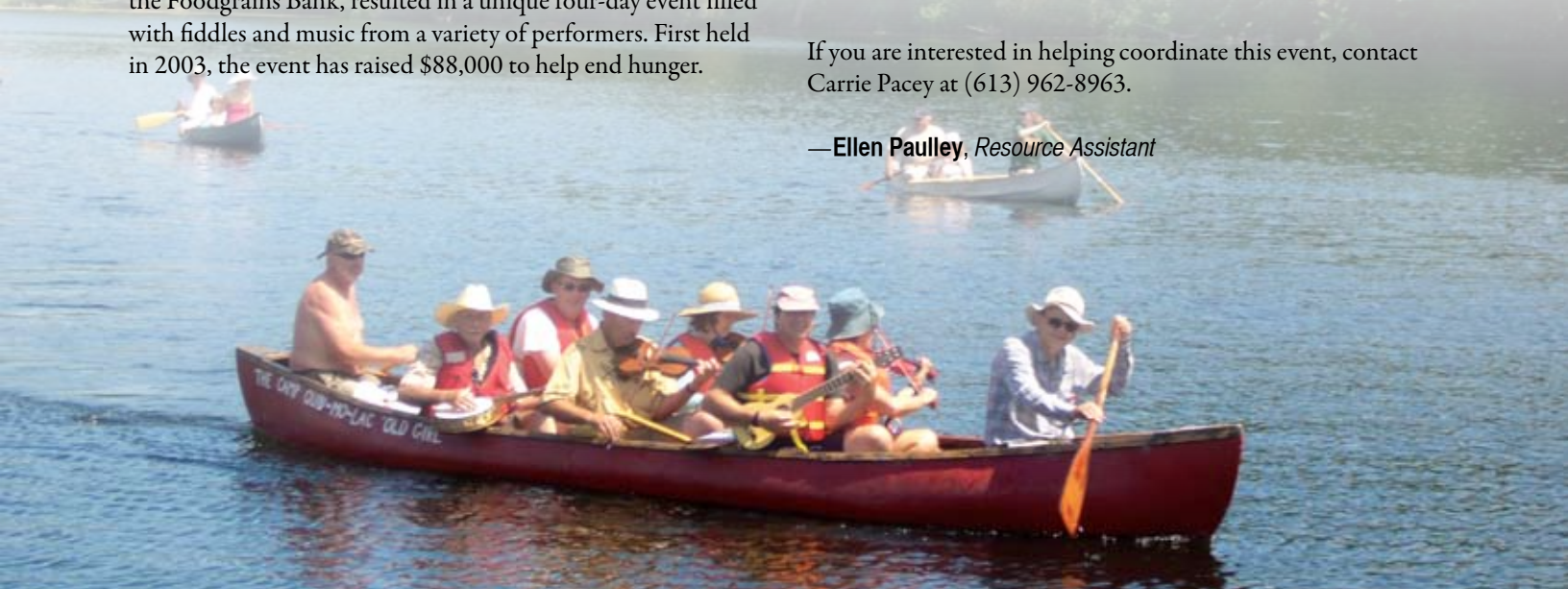
“It doesn't matter that they're strangers,” she says.

Lois Thompson also reports strong relationships among the many event volunteers and churches who partner to host the festival. The local Anglican, Catholic, Christian Reformed, Free Methodist, United, and Pentecostal churches all join efforts to make Fiddlers on the Trent a success. For Lois, an event like this “is a wonderful way to foster the community of Christians.”

This year, Fiddlers on the Trent is taking a hiatus, to draw in more volunteer support, which is needed to successfully host the event.

If you are interested in helping coordinate this event, contact Carrie Pacey at (613) 962-8963.

—Ellen Paulley, *Resource Assistant*





Voices from the South

How Should We Measure Success?

“How do we know if our efforts to end hunger are working? And how should we measure effectiveness?”

These are the kinds of questions being asked by Terence Sibanda, who is on a one-year internship with Canadian Foodgrains Bank through the International Voluntary Exchange Program.

Terence, who is from Zimbabwe, has first-hand experience with these issues; before coming to Canada last August, he monitored a Foodgrains Bank-supported school feeding program in that country.

His job was to measure effectiveness—to make sure the right people were receiving food and seeds. But what’s the best way to do that?

“People often want to hear numbers,” he says. “They want to know that the money has been used to reach many people. But big numbers shouldn’t be the only way to measure success.”

According to Terence, not all of the benefits of development projects can be quantified.

Take the school feeding program, for example. “We were able to provide meals for over 7,000 students, and school attendance increased, but those aren’t the only ways to measure its effectiveness,” he says.

Many students, who now weren’t as hungry, were better able to concentrate on their studies, and community members were volunteering to cook for the students, which created a strong sense of belonging.

“Those are things that can’t be quantified,” he says. “How do you put a number on the raising of community spirit? But those are real benefits, too.”

For Terence, the best way to measure effectiveness are sustainability and longevity—can a project continue without outside help?

The challenge facing organizations like the Foodgrains Bank is that these goals can be hard to achieve, noting that, “the challenges on the ground are overwhelming.”

In the same school program, it wasn’t enough to simply distribute corn meal to one school—the school didn’t have access to water. “It was not as simple as just delivering the food,” he says. “We had to also make sure they had water, so they could cook the food.”

One thing he has appreciated about his time in Canada is meeting many people who understand the challenges of doing good development work. He is also grateful for the generosity shown by many people who donate time and money to the Foodgrains Bank.

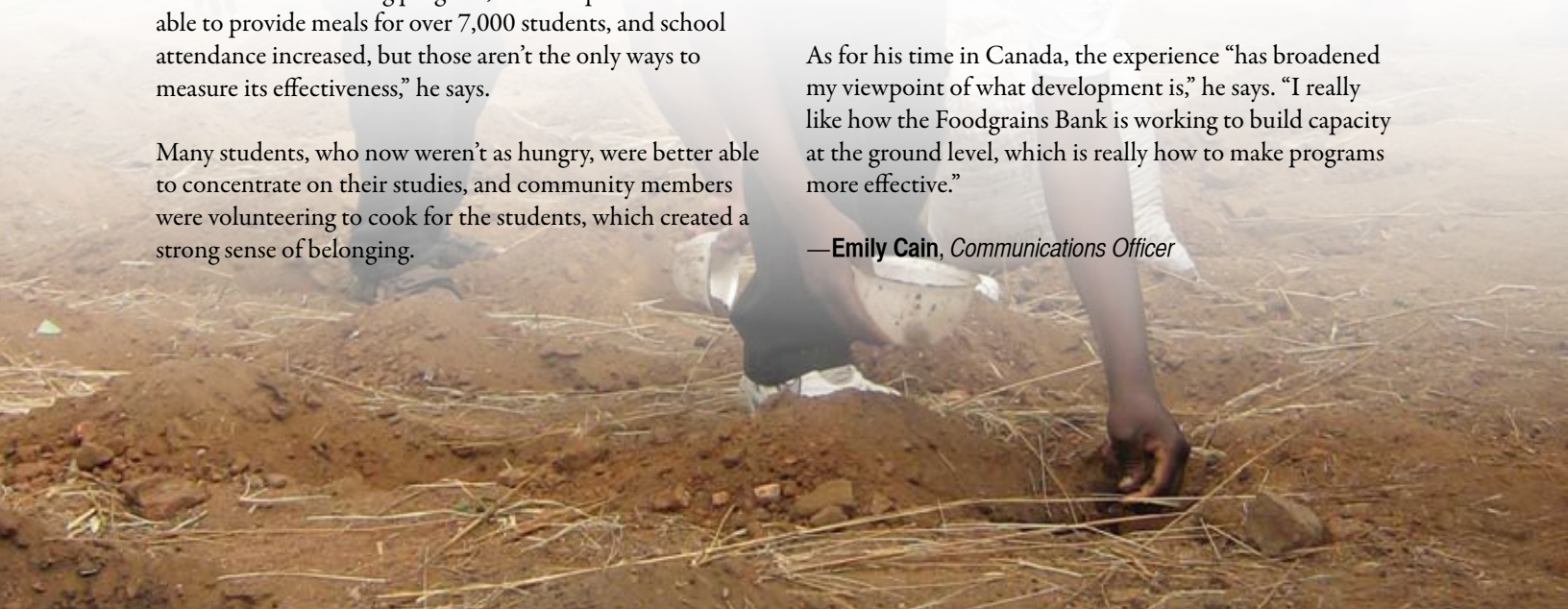
“It’s incredible that so many want to help someone on the other side of the world,” he says. “So much good can happen when people come together for a common purpose.”

At the same time, he has learned how challenging it can be for a large organization, like the Foodgrains Bank, to deal with multiple perspectives, partners and agencies to accomplish its goal of ending hunger.

Nothing is straightforward in development,” he says. “You have to influence policy, which takes a long time, and fund-raise millions of dollars.”

As for his time in Canada, the experience “has broadened my viewpoint of what development is,” he says. “I really like how the Foodgrains Bank is working to build capacity at the ground level, which is really how to make programs more effective.”

—Emily Cain, *Communications Officer*



International Programs

Country	# of Programs	# of Beneficiaries	Total Budget	Food Tonnage	Commodity Type
Afghanistan	1	2,784	\$286,956		
Bangladesh	4	136,400	\$1,844,786	1,549	Rice, oil, pulses, salt, sugar, seeds
Bolivia	1	20,000	\$48,960		
Burundi	1	20,000	\$334,141	617	Maize, pulses
Cambodia	1	4,700	\$173,130		
DPR Korea	1	12,287	\$58,579		
DR Congo	2	27,500	\$386,124		
El Salvador	1	1,050	\$84,545		
Ethiopia	9	101,589	\$2,338,028	2,336	Wheat, maize, sorghum, oil, pulses, famix, seeds
Haiti	2	9,600	\$673,434	230	Rice, oil, pulses
India	8	564,320	\$3,368,176	5,169	Wheat, rice, oil, pulses, salt, other
Iraq	1	11,732	\$451,922		
Kenya	5	195,750	\$2,075,725	2,440	Maize, oil, pulses
Laos	2	4,747	\$305,236	233	Rice
Liberia	2	16,200	\$746,915		
Malawi	4	30,500	\$875,317	1,093	Maize, pulses, seeds, salt
Mongolia	1	3,000	\$211,211		
Mozambique	4	36,200	\$546,144	360	Wheat, pulses
Nepal	2	46,272	\$197,754	1	Seeds
Nicaragua	1	1,080	\$157,986		
Niger	2	8,866	\$81,684	121	Rice, millet, oil, pulses, salt, sugar, other
Pakistan	5	266,736	\$6,081,243	9,505	Wheat flour, rice, oil, pulses, salt, sugar, chilli powder, tea
Palestine	1	3,000	\$78,824		
Philippines	1	50,000	\$350,201	311	Rice, oil, pulses, salt, sugar, other
Rwanda	1	3,592	\$96,025		
Sierra Leone	1	450	\$93,988		
Somalia	1	10,500	\$163,720	203	Maize, oil, pulses
South Africa	1	750	\$62,526		
Sri Lanka	4	33,850	\$335,895	340	Rice, oil, pulses, salt, sugar, chilli powder, garlic, tea
Sudan	4	212,352	\$2,202,175	601	Sorghum, oil, pulses, salt, sugar
Tanzania	2	21,400	\$762,623	655	Maize, oil, pulses, salt
Uganda	4	34,628	\$1,303,334	562	Maize, seeds
Zambia	2	25,100	\$678,896		
Zimbabwe	7	99,450	\$4,563,883	2,763	Maize, maize meal, oil, pulses, corn soya blend, seeds
TOTALS	89	2,016,385	\$32,020,083	29,087	

*From April 1, 2010 until February 28, 2011.



Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and 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 an immediate and sustainable basis; and influencing changes in public policies necessary to end hunger.

Member Agencies

ADRA Canada (Adventist Development and Relief Agency Canada) • www.adra.ca

Canadian Baptist Ministries • www.cbmin.org

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace • www.devp.org

Canadian Lutheran World Relief • www.clwr.org

Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada
www.cmacan.org

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
www.crwrc.org

Emergency Relief & Development Overseas (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada)
www.erdo.ca

Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
www.emcc.ca

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
www.mcc.org

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Canada
www.ncmc.ca

Presbyterian World Service & Development
www.presbyterian.ca

Primate's World Relief & Development Fund (Anglican Church of Canada)
www.pwrdf.org

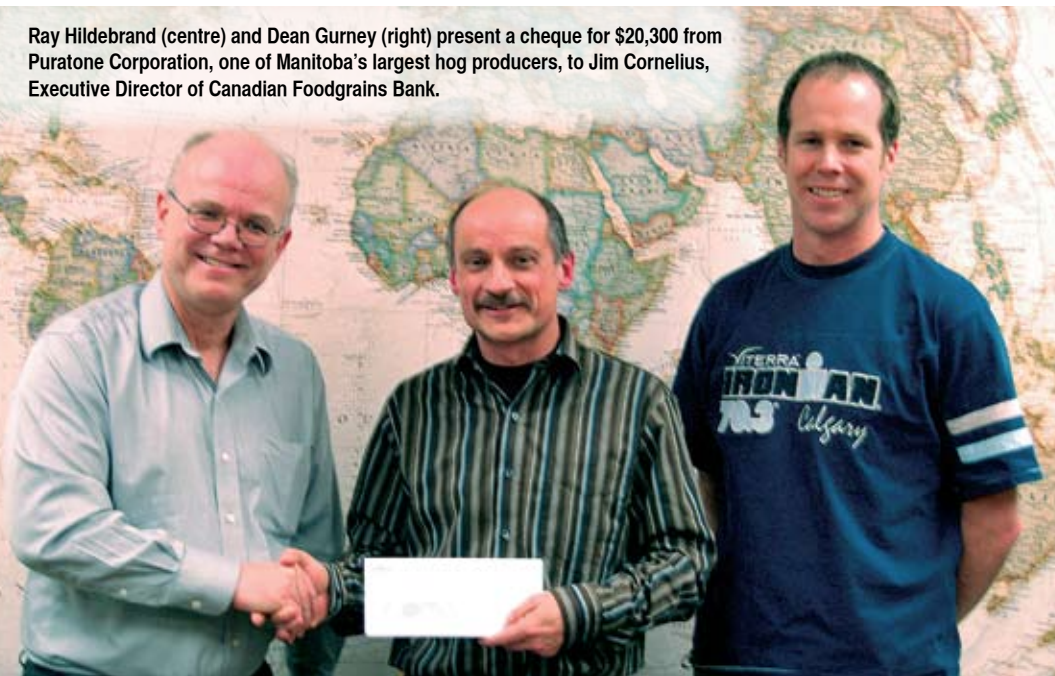
The Salvation Army • www.salvationarmy.ca

The United Church of Canada
www.united-church.ca

World Relief Canada • www.wrcanada.org

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Ray Hildebrand (centre) and Dean Gurney (right) present a cheque for \$20,300 from Puratone Corporation, one of Manitoba's largest hog producers, to Jim Cornelius, Executive Director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank.



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