

# Global hunger, farming, and climate change

As I look back on over 40 years of farming with my family – and another 100 years of our family farm before that – and I am struck by the wonderful changes I see in agriculture.

Like other Ontario grain farmers, we now have access to information and technology that helps us farm more efficiently than previous generations could ever have dreamed of. Agronomic science, data, and new innovations are allowing Canadian farmers to grow abundant, high-quality food on ever decreasing amounts of arable land.

Some things though, don't change.

Farmers know healthy soil is the heart of a farm business, and we do everything we can to protect it.

Farmers are on the frontline in the fight against climate change, and we understand the difficult work that must be done to address it. We depend on the earth for our livelihood, our family businesses and the continuation of the legacies handed down to us from previous generations.

But we also know this fundamental truth: difficult work has to be done to address global warming and climate change.

Another truth? Wet grain isn't safe to eat.

Passionate about finding a solution, we have been meeting with Members of Parliament and Senators about food insecurity. One thing we tell them is that wet grain is not going to feed the masses. We have to dry it. And we have to use natural gas or propane to dry our grain.

Because we know that food insecurity is a global concern. It's an uncomfortable truth that lots of Canadians are going to bed hungry these days too.

Grain farmers are working hard to increase production – whether it is trying new varieties to increase yield, exploring new plant nutrition products and strategies to increase the output, or trying new types of cover crops to keep the soil healthy and erosion at bay.

But while we try to innovate, input costs continue to rise. This is why we are supporting Bill C-234 – an Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which seeks to give farmers a short-term break from Canada's price on pollution for grain drying until the technological solutions we are all seeking are found.

When innovative ways to dry grain are developed, I can guarantee farmers will be quick to adopt them. Farm fuels are a major cost, and all farmers want to manage costs. But until alternative solutions are available, taxing the fuels used for grain drying only penalizes farmers and unnecessarily increases the cost of food production.

As a Canadian farmer – one of the two per cent of Canadians growing food for our nation and our neighbours around the world – I am asking Senators to support the timely passage of this important legislation.

Brendan Byrne  
Chair, Grain Farmers of Ontario

