



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GC33 Family Farms (1990F121)

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Whereas our God creator call is the responsibility and privilege of stewardship of the land,
and

Whereas it is the right of those most directly affected to have free participation in decisions
that affect their lives and

Whereas there has been a steady and intentional erosion of numbers of small family farms

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 33rd General Council of The United Church of Canada
adopt the following statement:

In 1969 the Government of Canada adopted an official policy paper 'Challenge for Growth' stating that about one-half of the farms in Canada should be eliminated. Successive governments have continued this policy. From 1971 to 1986, 366,110 farms in Canada were reduced to 293,089. Statistics Canada predicts a further reduction to 100,000 farms by the year 2000. This policy of economic expediency has been engaged in without concern for human well-being or the environment. It has resulted in untold suffering, disintegration of farm families, rural communities and a way of life. It has caused economic hardship and unemployment, migration to urban centres and an increase in the numbers of poor and marginalized Canadians. It has robbed rural Canadians and all of us of a deep and rich heritage. Our society and our church has allowed this to happen with little challenge to the federal government. Nor, we confess, have we sufficiently recognized the pain of those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by these decisions and policies. We affirm our belief that God calls us to care for all in our community and that our humanity and the image of God in us is diminished when we do not seek justice for the most vulnerable in our midst. We affirm our believe that the preservation of the family farm, the development of sustainable agriculture and the participation of farm people in decisions that affect their lives must be priority issues for our church and our community. With this in mind we commit ourselves to the following:

1. calling on the federal government to withdraw and reverse its policy on eliminating family farms;
2. calling on governments at all levels to discontinue policies and programs which subsidize, promote and support large corporate agricultural development;
3. calling on congregations and presbyteries and encouraging ecumenical training centres dialogue events where farm families can meet with and educate other church members;
4. seeking creative ways to give support to farm families as they seek to persevere.

GC33 1990 ROP, p. 167

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