



THE RAM'S HORN

An Occasional Newsletter of Food System Analysis & Beyond

No. 302, March-April 2014

ISSN 0827-4053

Evolution

The Ram's Horn is getting on – 210 dog years, in fact. It started with a newsletter mimeographed on our own machine to explain to Nova Scotia sheep farmers what was going on in their provincial association, of which Brewster was the secretary.

At the time, we were part of a Nova Scotian group working with a co-op in New Brunswick to ship lambs to Montreal, rather than take our chances on the Thursday auction sale in Truro or, worse, depend on the 'drovers' who would go from farm to farm picking up lambs at whatever price they would offer. (Without Internet or even reliable telephones, it was hard for farmers to know the going price.) Because we had the largest flock and the necessary handling facilities, the truck came to our farm every Friday to pick up the lambs. One week the shipment was only our own lambs, and for fun, Brewster went off to the auction to see what was there. He came home with a load of nice lambs, loaded them onto the 'possum-belly' truck when it arrived the next day, and at the next meeting of the Sheep Producers Association told everyone the results: "I made more money off those lambs overnight than I could make on my own lambs for a year of work," he said. "We need to work together to take charge of marketing our own lambs!"

Well, it seems a drover in the room had some friends who he recruited as new members. At the next meeting they voted Brewster out of office and the farmer-drover took over the association. So the first edition of The Ram's Horn, which we sent to all the sheep farmers, was devoted to reporting who had done it, why and how.



That led to a second newsletter, and a third.

Trying to address the farmers' questions such as "How come New Zealand can sell lamb here for cheaper than we can raise it?" led to a broader analysis of how the whole food system works. As interest grew we went from bi-monthly to monthly, and the range of reporting and analysis continued to grow.

It's been more than thirty years now since we started, and for a variety of reasons we find it hard to keep up to 10 issues a year. One of our major concerns is that we find that many of the issues we have discussed are continuing, as are the players, and we don't want to insult our regular readers by repeating ourselves. (Some long-time subscribers may recognize the graphic below from 2007.)

Over the years our scope and focus has also changed, as we continue to try to dig deeper and uncover the underlying cultural and political assumptions that frame the visible issues of biotechnology, corporate control, international finance, climate change, etc.

Recognizing that we are not keeping up to our description of a monthly newsletter, with this issue you will see that we now describe it as *an occasional newsletter of food system analysis, and beyond*.

Note to subscribers: Subscriptions continue to run for 10 issues. Your sub expires with the issue number on the label; if you are getting the electronic version you will get an email reminder.

Who Makes Policy? – B.K.

Years back, when we had quit farming and moved back to Ontario, I got the idea of writing about Cargill so that the farmers and businesses dealing with the company could have some idea of who they were dealing with. I also got to wondering who was creating Canadian agricultural policy since it was clearly not in the interests of Canadian farmers or the public. I soon discovered that a Cargill vice president, David Gilmore, had moved to Agriculture Canada in 1985 as “coordinator of commodity strategy development” under an Executive Exchange program. He returned to his old job two years later, having overseen the reorientation of Canadian ag policy to suit Cargill’s interests.

Little has changed over the years in power relations and in how Cargill’s interests are taken into consideration by national governments, as indicated below.

“Cargill’s director of international business relations, Devrey Boughner Vorwerk, has been named one of 214 Young Global Leaders by the world economic forum for 2014. . . .Vorwerk, 40, was honoured for her extensive work as a key player in Cargill’s efforts to promote free trade agreements around the world.” She came to Cargill from the US International Trade Commission where she served as economic advisor to the chairman. – *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* 12/3/14

“Saving Lives”, Making Profits

Norman Borlaug won the Nobel Prize in 1970 for his Green Revolution “high yielding” wheat breeding. The mythology says he saved the lives of a billion people with his “miracle wheat”. His granddaughter Julie Borlaug was asked what he would want us to focus on in the next 100 years, especially how we’re going to feed 9 billion by 2050. Her response reflects an arrogance and profound lack of respect for traditional food systems:

“We need to move the message forward that innovation and technology in agriculture are how we are going to get this done. He would be angry about this anti-GMO, anti-big ag, anti-technology movement. The reason why we have the lifestyles we have now is because of the advancements in agriculture in the past 100 years. We would not have the lifestyles, we wouldn’t have education, all of that, if we hadn’t progressed like we had and come out of an agrarian system.

It seems that all the anti group is so anti-corporate that they want to block anything that has to do with innovation and technology. They can’t divorce the two, and that is

unfair to those in the developing world who could benefit from some of this stuff.” – *Des Moines Register*, 24/3/2014

Has it never occurred to Ms. Borlaug that people in the “developing world” have very effective techniques and have neither desire nor need for our wasteful, greedy, habitat-destroying lifestyle?

More troubling than this is the support for this attitude at the highest levels. Before he was elected, President Obama called for labeling of genetically engineered products. His position seems to have changed.

In a letter to Julie Borlaug dated April 11, 2014, President Obama wrote about how pleased he was to join in celebrating her grandfather’s life and his passion for feeding the hungry through biotechnology. He wrote, “*I share his belief that investment in enhanced biotechnology is an essential component of the solution to some of our planet’s most pressing agricultural problems.*” The President added, “*I will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture and others to explore innovative solutions to address food security challenges and mitigate the effects of climate change.*”

– *AgriPulse*, 16/4/14

Courts Act in the Public Interest

In Canada, the courts are rapidly replacing Parliament as the location of decisions which reflect the country’s Constitution and the best interests of the population. Meanwhile, in Brazil the Federal Appeals Court has unanimously decided to annul the decision by Brazil’s Biosecurity Commission (CTNBio), which had allowed the release for cultivation of Liberty Link GM Maize. The ruling is another legal disaster for the biotech industry as it follows the decision taken by a court in the Campeche region of Mexico to ban GM Soybean cultivation to protect the traditional beekeeping of the Mayan people.

Never before has a Judge stated that there is a need for studies on the negative impacts of GMOs in all major biomes in the country. The decision may force Brazilian authorities to reconsider all other commercial releases of GMOs in Brazil.

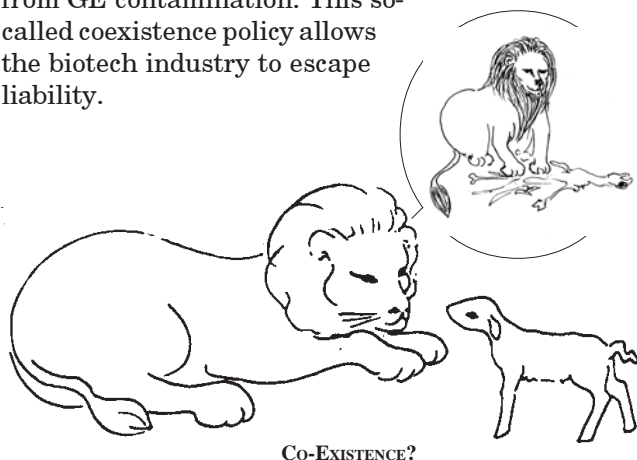
Federal Judge Candido Silva Alfredo Leal Junior read excerpts from his decision for about an hour and a half. In addition to his comments on biomes, the Judge ordered CTNBio to develop standards to enable the general public to have access to documents in the file processed by the Commission.

– *Sustainable Pulse*, 20/3/14

How To Escape Liability

Three years ago, US Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack charged his newly appointed Advisory Committee with addressing the problem of GE contamination by identifying ways to compensate farmers after-the-fact, rather than protect them from contamination in the first place. The Committee was charged with *assuming that GE contamination was an inevitable and acceptable cost of doing business, as long as the affected farmers were compensated [our emphasis]*, but this approach was completely unacceptable to farmers rejecting the use of biotechnology and those who sell their crops to organic and non-GE markets.

Now two primary recommendations are being put forward by the US Department of Agriculture: the creation of non-binding farmer-neighbour “coexistence agreements,” and organic and other non-GE farmers taking out insurance to recoup losses from GE contamination. This so-called coexistence policy allows the biotech industry to escape liability.



Co-EXISTENCE?

Cargill Refuses Syngenta's GE Corn

Mindful of the fact that Syngenta's new GE corn, Agrisure Duracade, has not been approved for import by two major buyers of US crops, China and the EU, Cargill Inc. has announced that, for export contracts, it will not accept delivery of any commodity containing the Duracade trait. Cargill is the top exporter of US grain and oilseeds. “Cargill reserves the right to reject and/or require testing of deliveries and any acceptance, rejection or testing for the presence of Duracade will be determined by Cargill in its sole discretion at the time of delivery,” the company said.

The commercialization of Duracade has split the U.S. farm sector and pitted global grain merchants against Swiss-based Syngenta, the world's largest crop chemicals company.

Since November, China's authorities have rejected more than 600,000 tonnes of U.S. corn and corn products containing another unauthorized genetically modified Syngenta corn trait, Agrisure Viptera. which has been awaiting Beijing's approval for more than two years.

Syngenta has said Duracade will be available in limited quantities and that growers need new technologies. The company has said it commercializes corn traits in line with industry practices, once it has approval from countries with “*functioning regulatory systems [our emphasis]*.”

– *Agri.EU*, 18/2/14

“Science-based” Decisions: In Whose Interest?

Dr. Arden Andersen, D.O., a family doctor in Indiana, writes:

As a scientist . . . I recognize that technology is not necessarily needed, safe or viable just because it is “technological”, the latest thing offered by industry for our supposed improved lifestyle.

I . . . prescribe[d] Rezulin when it first came out, touted as the best thing since sliced bread in diabetic treatment drugs. It was great right up to the point that patients dropped dead from liver failure. Rezulin was quickly taken off the market never to return, yet it got to the market supposedly after rigorous scientific scrutiny, three phases of clinical trials and a whole lot of hype from the manufacturer. . . . it taught me to use more common sense, think about the mechanisms of action, the potential adverse effects, the differences between patients and discard the hype from the manufacturers.

The longer I practice medicine, the more I witness that the FDA's/USDA's approval or disapproval of therapies, devices and products are far more politically determined than scientifically determined. I take the common sense scientific approach in looking at genetically engineered crops or GMO's. – *Food Plague Primer: Glyphosate and Genetically Engineered Crops*, <http://cabecahealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/FoodPlaguePrimer.pdf>

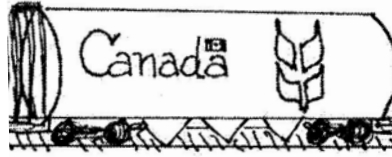
Ann Slater, an Ontario farmer and NFU Vice-President, comments:

Our environment, our farms and our food sovereignty are all under threat if we continue to give multinational agribusiness corporations control over the science used to make “science-based” decisions on our farms and in regulations pertaining to health agriculture, and our environment.

– *Union Farmer newsletter*, 2/14

“Clogged”

Under this headline, *The Western Producer* reported the failure of the railroads (CN & CPR) to transport last year's record grain crops to export position on the west coast. The railroads blamed the exceptionally cold weather this past winter that reduced its capacity to handle grain shipments – as if cold winters were a novelty in Canada! Yet both railroads reported record revenues last year while they reduced the number of trains, increased the length of trains, and slashed the number of railway workers slashed (4,800 since 2012).



Federal policy calls for an ever increasing devotion to exporting Canadian agricultural products, and organizations like the Canola Council are calling for a substantial increase in the canola crop for export. Western Canada has traditionally exported 27-31 million tonnes of grain and oilseeds annually. Average production of cereals, oilseeds, pulses and specialty crops was estimated at 40 to 45 millions tonnes a year in the 1980s, while now it is more than 50 million tonnes. The 2013 harvest exceeded 75 million tonnes.

– source: WP 6/3/14, 13/3/14

The cause of the backlog is straightforward, as Jan Slomp, an Alberta dairy farmer and President of the National Farmers Union, has written: “The current chaos in grain transportation is caused by the loss of the CWB’s coordination at port terminals, as well as by the lack of enforcement of the statutory obligation for rail companies to move prairie grain. The Canadian Wheat Board, with its single desk authority over sales and over railroads and port facilities, ensured the system was orderly and worked efficiently to achieve premium grain prices and minimize transportation costs for prairie farmers for more than 75 years.”

To understand why the CWB was dismantled, we need to put aside any consideration of the complexities of Western Canadian agriculture and think in the simplistic ideological terms of Federal ag minister Gerry Ritz and his boss Harper, that demonize anything collective, cooperative, or even public.

With this ideological fixation firmly in place, enemies can be readily identified: labour unions, farmers’ unions, public service associations, public seed breeders, and, of course, organizations such as the now defunct Canadian Wheat Board and the prairie grain cooperatives (Wheat Pools). In the view of the far right, such collectivities are bad not because they are incompetent and inefficient or lacking in ‘productivity’, which they aren’t, but because they are in one way or another working together for the common or collective good. The

proper behaviour for right-wingers and libertarians is individualism, everyone for themselves, and ‘competitiveness’.

So, having overseen the destruction of orderly marketing and carefully orchestrated coordination of grain movement from farm to export position with the destruction of the multi-purpose farmer-run Canadian Wheat Board, Ag Minister Ritz stepped in on 7 March with an order in council directing the railroads to move one million tonnes of grain per week, roughly 11,000 carloads, or face fines as high as \$100,000 per day. However, ordering the railroads to clean up the mess he has created out of the grain economy of western Canada can hardly be considered a decent ‘solution’.

Predictably, “the head of Canadian National Railway is warning that the country’s grain terminals, elevators and ports cannot cope with the number of rail cars needed to fulfill a government order to move more of the commodity.” – *G&M Report on Business*, 3/4/14

We are not the only ones who refuse to believe that the very people who have dismantled a system that functioned well and served farmers well would have the knowledge and the wherewithal to fix it: “The government really has to decide whether . . . it’s acceptable to them to have the railways determine the economic priorities of Canada.” – *Keith Bruch, VP of Winnipeg-based agricultural commodities shipper Paterson Global Foods.*

Public Plant Breeding Attacked

by Glenn Tait

The Cereal Research Centre (CRC) is being closed, marking the end of nearly a century of public plant breeding. It is another sorry landmark on the Harper government’s systematic path of destruction through Canada’s public agriculture institutions.

Publicly funded plant breeding at the CRC, along with other Agriculture Canada research stations and several Canadian universities, has produced most of Canada’s cereal crop varieties, which are the foundation for our grain industry. According to Industry Canada, approximately 50% of wheat and oat acreage in Canada is seeded to varieties developed at the CRC.

The federal government is not only closing the CRC, but is winding down all public funding for spring wheat plant breeding to make way for private sector investment. Ag Canada will allow scientists to continue work already in progress, but will not support new breeding, nor allow the current work to proceed to the final stage of producing the actual varieties that farmers can buy. The CRC’s top-notch

spring wheat team has been broken up, and only a handful of Ag Canada wheat breeders remain at the Brandon, Swift Current and Lethbridge research stations.

At a 2013 meeting of the Canadian Seed Trade Association, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Director General Stephen Morgan Jones laid out the federal government's vision: AAFC would "vacate" variety finishing; germ plasm developed by AAFC scientists would be sold to private companies; intellectual property rights rules would be redrawn to benefit private breeders; and variety registration rules would be revisited.

Yet public plant breeding gives a very high return on investment. Studies by University of Saskatchewan agricultural economist Dr. Richard Gray show that every dollar invested in cereals breeding returns at least \$20, and often more. When the federal government invests \$30 million annually in wheat breeding it creates at least \$600 million in value that is distributed among farmers in the form of better crops, providing income to pay wages, taxes, and check-offs for additional research, while supporting agriculture-related businesses in rural communities and helping processors and consumers who benefit from better wheat.

When private companies invest, however, most of these high returns go to private shareholders – a majority being wealthy non-Canadians. In the case of genetically modified canola, soy and corn, gene patents, hybridization and contracts ensure companies can hold onto most, if not all of the returns by forcing farmers to buy expensive new seed each year. . .

By de-funding and vacating public spring wheat breeding, the federal government is handing Bayer, Syngenta, Monsanto and Dow. . . an incredibly lucrative new source of profits.

In addition, if changes to variety registration rules proposed in May 2013 are adopted, companies will be able to deregister older varieties that no longer provide them with royalties, forcing farmers to choose among fewer and more expensive varieties.

When the Dominion Rust Research Laboratory, the CRC's predecessor, was established in 1925, Prairie farmers were fighting for a fair share against the oligopolies of the banks, railways and grain companies, and we eventually built the Canadian Wheat Board as a counterweight with power to act in the farmers' interest. Today, in the shadow of the economic disaster the Conservative government unleashed by tearing down the CWB, it is now adding insult to injury by creating a new seed oligopoly. *-NFU, 7/4/14*

Crop Rotation is Best Protection

Resistance to one type of Bt toxin in western corn rootworms has been around for a while, but researchers have now found that resistance to that type of Bt toxin also confers protection against another, more recently introduced type. "That's two of the three toxins on the market now," says Aaron Gassmann, an entomologist at Iowa State University. "It's a substantial part of the available technology."

Genetically modified maize producing the Bt toxin Cry3Bb1, which provided protection against pests such as rootworm, was first approved for use in the United States in 2003. By 2009, farmers had started to see rootworm damage in their GM crops. In 2011, that damage had spread to GM maize containing a second toxin, mCry3A. In lab tests, Gassmann showed that this was a case of cross-resistance – worms that had become resistant to Cry3Bb1 were also resistant to mCry3A, possibly because the toxins share structural similarities and some binding sites in the insect's gut.

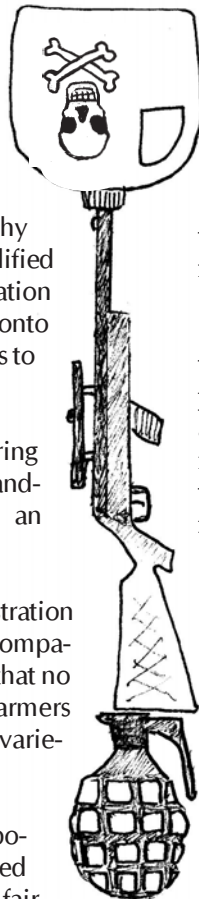
Part of the problem is that more than 2% of rootworms can survive Bt maize (as opposed to the Bt toxins used against pests such as the European corn borer which kill more than 99.99% of their targets.) Resistance can evolve rapidly in fields where the same kind of maize is grown every year — in Iowa it showed up after an average of 3.6 years.

Nicholas Storer from Dow AgroSciences says that the study illustrates that if GM crops are not used as part of an integrated pest-management policy, resistance can develop quickly in an individual field. Companies such as Dow are now 'pyramiding' their seeds so that they produce two different Bt toxins to attack the rootworm. For example, Dow has teamed up with Monsanto to sell seeds that combine Cry3Bb1 with Cry34/35Ab1, a toxin that has so far not seen any resistance develop.

Gassmann says that the pyramiding of toxins is an important way to delay the development of resistance, but that the combination is less effective once resistance arises to one of the toxins. So farmers should not rely exclusively on technology to fight pests, and should instead periodically change the crop grown on a field to help disrupt the pest's life cycle. "The rootworm can't survive if the corn's not there," Gassmann says.

Storer agrees that even the best technologies will always need to be combined with the old methods. "Crop rotation was the primary tool to combat rootworm before Bt came along," he says. "We need to keep it up."

-Nature, 18/3/14



PYRAMIDING
TOXINS

Globalization and Food Sovereignty

Edited by Peter André, Jeffrey Ayres, Michael J. Bosia, and Marie-Josée Masicotte; U of T Press, 2014



This is a really interesting and useful book. I usually have a hard time with academic writing, but in this case the ideas are so clearly presented, and so relevant, that I can highly recommend it.

Of course it doesn't hurt that the authors, from their different perspectives, are examining a process in which I have been deeply engaged for a number of years: the development of the concepts and practice of food sovereignty, in particular (for me) here in Canada.

The term 'food sovereignty' was brought into international attention by La Via Campesina, the global peasant movement. Its primary purpose is to promote the critical importance of basic, grassroots food production and therefore the authority that small-scale food producers and their communities should exercise over the design and working of their food systems. Since peasants are embedded in their communities, their perspectives can be relied upon to emphasize inclusion, social justice, and agro-ecological sensitivity and sustainability.

The book's title refers to globalization, which is understood as the process by which corporate control is increasingly exercised over the economies (and politics) of the whole world; the term neo-liberalism is used to describe the current ideological expression of capital expansion and control. So this is the context in which food sovereignty emerges as a counter-narrative, and some of the most interesting discussions in the book centre around the relationship between food sovereignty and neo-liberalism, particularly in Canada.

In the peasant context, solidarity, producing food for your community, seed saving and breeding, the sharing and use of traditional herbal and medicinal knowledge – these are all part of daily life and survival. Asserting these and related practices under the title of food sovereignty is not a stretch. But in North America the corporate strategy of distancing people from the sources of their food has been spectacularly successful,

and for most of us the relationship with our daily bread involves money, not the community. Individualism is the norm – imposed most harshly by the current Canadian Federal government which is in the process of systematically destroying every organization and institution which expresses and enables a more social way of being.

In this system, as well, we need to earn money in order to eat, and this means that despite the incredibly generous volunteer efforts that have gone into building the food movement in Canada, in order to move beyond very small and local initiatives, we find ourselves needing to pay people to do the work. This, in turn, makes it very hard to openly oppose the dominant, neo-liberal system from which the money to pay these people has to come.

The result is that a great deal of the work achieved by the food movement fits into the dominant mode. On the one hand, there's the development of niches which wind up within the global market. Fair Trade is the obvious example, but the creation of national Organic standards also facilitates the export/import model even within a system which was (and in many cases still is) deeply rooted in and committed to direct relationships within an ecological model. Similarly, development of Local Food, which encourages wholesale and retail markets for locally-produced foods and direct relationships between, for example, farmers and restaurant chefs, certainly increases the region's food-producing capacity and the survival of farmers (which are an endangered species, it seems) but does not actually challenge the corporate model. On the other hand, there are the efforts to empower people, mostly with limited incomes, to gain skills which help them to achieve a more acceptable diet – community kitchens, gardens, lower-cost distribution systems from the Good Food Box to the Veggie Van in poor neighbourhoods, to mention a few. These are wonderful in reducing the stigma of receiving charity and increasing personal dignity, but remain a long way from the holistic and collective food sovereignty approach.

All of this is what I have given my life to since my eyes were opened to the realities of the food system through farming and through the People's Food Commission (1978-80). So when I read the analyses in this book, and in particular Peter André and Sarah Martin's analysis of the People's Food Policy Project in which I was a leader, I felt like a butterfly pinned under a microscope – which was much less painful and more insightful than you might think. Like the other authors, Peter and Sarah acknowledge that the core of food sovereignty is a mode of resistance and deeply subversive of neo-liberalism; but they also see the work we have all been doing in the food movement here as

opening space beyond its own parameters. In other words, while individual empowerment certainly does not, by itself, undermine the destructive and rapacious forces of capitalism, it can provide an essential first step towards a deeper and more cohesive movement in that direction.

In his concluding essay, Philip McMichael comments: "... "food sovereignty" ... is not about restoring a

peasant utopia; rather it is about countering the catastrophic social and ecological effects of the neoliberal assault on the agrarian foundations of society." The term "agrarian citizenship" and indeed the whole question of the state, emerge as important areas for further dissection and discussion. I am looking forward to the national Assembly of Food Secure Canada in Halifax next November as one place where I think that will be happening.

– C.K.

Stifling Peasant Agriculture

Mozambique's small farmers are afraid of Brazilian-style agriculture being imposed on them with the help of Japanese interests.

The Programme of Triangular Co-operation for Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannahs of Mozambique (ProSavana), is backed by the co-operation agencies of Brazil (ABC) and Japan (Jica).

Inspired by the technology for tropical agriculture developed in Brazil, ProSavana is aimed at increasing production in the Nacala corridor, a 14.5million hectare area in central and northern Mozambique with agricultural potential similar to Brazil's Cerrado region, and the advantage of a nearby port on the Indian Ocean. The triangular agreement, which was reached in 2011 and combines Japan's import market with Brazil's knowhow and Mozambique's land, has already proved fertile ground for controversy.

The prospect of turning the corridor into the country's breadbasket is expected to intensify conflicts over land by attracting companies focused on large-scale, high-yield production on immense estates that displace traditional farming populations.

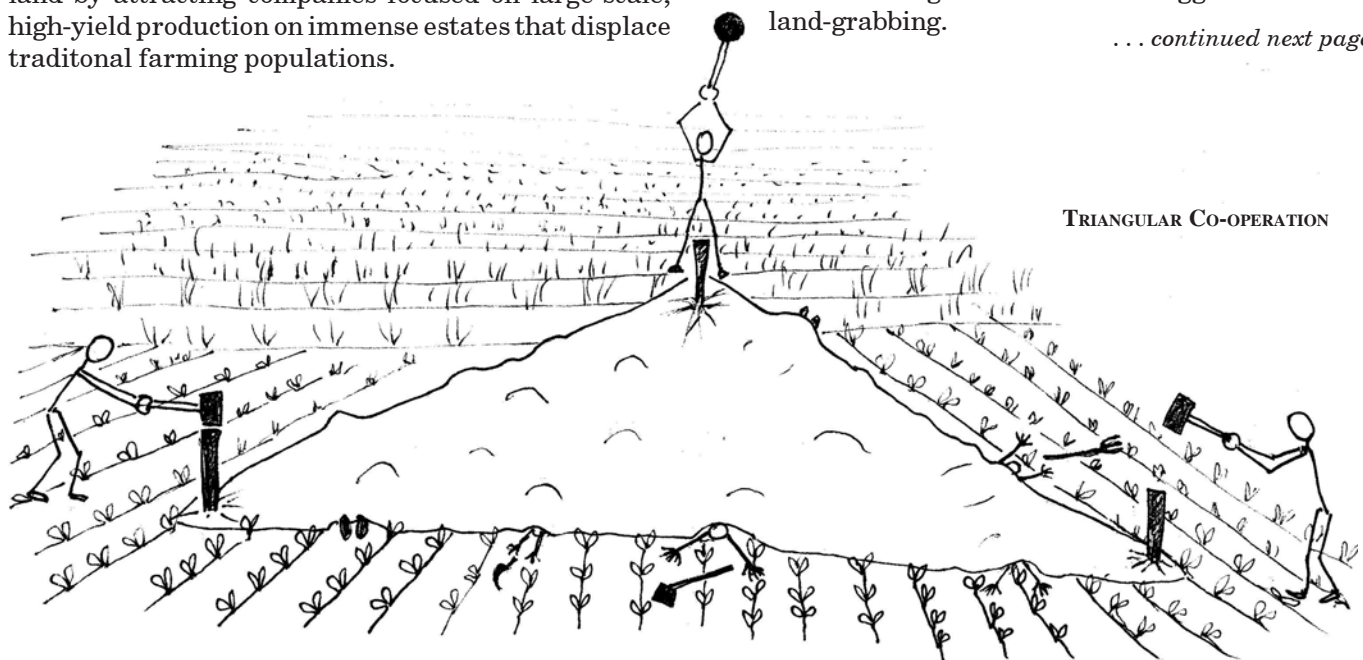
Of the 4.5 million inhabitants of the corridor, 80% live in rural areas, representing much higher population density than in Brazil and other countries, where the countryside has lost much of its population as agriculture has modernised.

The co-ordinator of ProSavana, Calisto Bias, said the main objective of the programme is to support farmers living in the corridor and help to improve their production techniques by modernising and diversifying agriculture with a view to boosting productivity and output.

Local people are sceptical. Sheila Rafi, natural resources officer with a Mozambican environmental organisation, said monoculture will undermine the tradition of "producing a little of everything for their own diet". (Cassava is the basis of the local diet. The small farmers also grow maize, pumpkins, sunflowers and sweet potatoes for their own consumption, as well as cash crops: cotton, tobacco and cashew nuts.)

But the greatest fear – the biggest threat – is land-grabbing.

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Under Mozambican law, all land belongs to the state and cannot be sold or mortgaged. Many people are trying to protect their land by obtaining the "land usage right" based on customary occupancy (known as Duat). Farmers can apply to the government for a Duat for up to 50 years. But the certificate does not actually guarantee a thing, local farmers say.

There is reason to fear. Major agribusiness companies such as Japan's Nitori Holding Company operate in the district of Malema, 230km from the city of Nampula. Nitori was granted a concession to grow cotton on 20,000 hectares of land, and the people who live there will be resettled elsewhere.

Another of the companies is Agromoz (Agribusiness de Moçambique SA), a joint venture between Brazil, Mozambique and Portugal, which is producing soy on 10,000 hectares. *— source: theguardian.com, 1/1/14*

Back home in Canada, residents of British Columbia are fighting a provincial government bill which would change the rules for the Agricultural Land Reserve, which protects the 5% of BC's land deemed suitable for agriculture. Only 10% of this, in the high-pressure zones of the Fraser Valley, Okanagan, and southern Vancouver Island, would retain full protection under the proposals in Bill 24. The remainder, including high-quality as well as rangelands in the North, would be

under threat of being lost to other uses, including mining and timber extraction.

Farmers, ranchers, and the Commission responsible for the Land Reserve, complain that there was no consultation and are demanding that the bill be pulled until there can be a full public discussion.

— for more information, go to bcfsn.org/ and check the ALR Watch page on Facebook.

A New Lamb Co-Op

Shades of Northumberland—but much more ambitious—in Manitoba. Sarto Sheep Farm, near the town of Sarto in south-eastern Manitoba, is the largest sheep farm in Canada, with something like 5000 ewes. Its owner, Pat Smith, also president of the Canadian Lamb Co-op, is now working with lamb processing company Integrated Foods of New Zealand to increase the flock to 30,000 in order to be able to supply major retailers across Canada with a regular and uniform supply of lamb.

Sarto and Integrated Foods intend to form Canada Sheep with the goal of building a vertically integrated business on the Prairies. This is not the first ambitious lamb project on the Prairies, and maybe it will succeed where the others have failed.



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cheques payable to The Ram's Horn

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40044236
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to
2746 Cassels Street
Ottawa ON, K2B 6N7, Canada

Subscriptions:

Canada, \$25(regular), \$50 (patron)
United States: US\$25, CDN \$27
outside North America: \$28 (airmail)

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Published 10 times a year; subscriptions expire with the issue number on the label.