



Ontario Home Economics Association

Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Happy 2014 to Family Farmers

by Mary Carver, P.H.Ec. - OHEA

The United Nations (UN) has declared 2014 as the *International Year of Family Farming*. The proclamation aims to increase awareness of the importance of family farming in addressing world issues such as poverty, food security and protection of the environment.

The goal of the declaration is to ‘reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in national agendas.’ The UN hopes that it will spur discussion at local, national and international levels of governments. The decree includes both developing and developed countries, including Canada.

The UN defines family farming as ‘all family-based agricultural activities, and it is linked to several areas of rural development. Family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women’s and men’s.’

According to the UN website, family farming is important for three main reasons:

- it is linked to world food security;
- it promotes balanced diets and helps protect biodiversity; and
- it promotes strong local economies when coupled with other policies which serve to protect the well-being of communities.

The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) supports the UN focus on the family farm and trusts the special recognition will translate into improved public understanding of the role family farms play in society.

While each generation seems farther removed from the farm that produces it’s food, Home Economists understand the plight of farmers as they struggle to compete in global markets against rising costs and climate challenges. OHEA applauds the commitment that local farmers make to future generations and to the environment.

Too often as consumers, we take food security for granted.

OHEA supports local food production and works with urban and rural families in all aspects of home and family life. Establishing mandatory food education in Ontario schools is a high priority for OHEA. Food security (production and availability of safe, affordable, nutritious food) is essential to all.

The International Year of Family Farming reminds us that sustainability of the family farm depends on informed consumers.

Let us celebrate 2014 by supporting local farmers and their families.

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Mary Carver, P.H.Ec., is an Ottawa-based Professional Home Economist and a member of the Ontario Home Economics Association.

Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA), a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

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