



## President's Message

### President, Jolande Oudshoorn, 2023-2024

Happy Spring Everyone,  
Planting season is well underway, but that doesn't stop Junior Farmers from getting out in the community. Whether it be roadside cleanups, fundraising for mental health, or euchre tournaments, members always find a way to embrace the values of being a Junior Farmer. This summer, we are looking forward to getting back into the full swing of things, starting with welcoming back our summer delegates for the first time since 2019! Delegates will be arriving June 9, and members will have the chance to get to meet them while learning leadership skills at Leadership Camp June 16-17. Summer Games is returning for the second year, hosted by Essex-Kent, on July 9, in Harrow, ON. Grey County will be hosting the Ambassador's Banquet on August 12, with Night at the Races rounding off the summer on August 18. Over the past few months, I have learned a lot about the rich history JFAO holds. I recently was introduced to Jean Bennett, creator of Gordie the Bear, as she happened to find my picture with Gordie in the Rural Voice. Jean created a teddy bear that was donated to JFAO for the 60th anniversary auction, and it included a custom vest and tie. It was purchased by Allan Orr, in memory of his brother, Gordie Orr, the first JFAO President. It made its way back to JFAO in 2014, in Claire Bunnik presidency, where it then became the responsibility of JFAO presidents to take care of the teddy bear. Kurtis Smith, the 73rd President, named the teddy bear Gordie and started the tradition of pinning the president's pin to Gordie while not in use. Gordie has become an excellent caretaker of the pin ever since.

In JF spirit,  
Jolande Oudshoorn  
Your 80th JFAO President

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Thanks to the support of....



## Upcoming Dates:

Leadership Camp – June 16 – 17,  
Beamsville, ON

Summer Games – July, Harrow, ON

Night at the Races – August, Elora,  
ON

August PD Meeting – August, 12,  
Grey, ON

Ambassador's Banquet - August 12  
Grey, ON

# Winter Games

Huron-Perth had a blast hosting the rest of the province in March for Winter Games! It was a day filled with sports, games, food, and lots of laughs. Bring back some of the classic games such as Volleyball, Basketball, Dodgeball, and Bubble soccer. Our committee also decided to add some new events to the day such as Indoor curling, Crokinole, target shooting and team ski racing.

Thank you to everyone who came out to winter games this year and to everyone who helped out. Hope you all had as much fun as we did and congratulations to Carleton for taking home the win!



## Keep Growing! Giant Pumpkin Growing Contest from Huron Perth!



Did you know pumpkins need 125-150 days to grow? 150 days from May 1 is September 29. Missed out on your seed packages at Winter Games or March Conference? Email [huronperthjf@gmail.com](mailto:huronperthjf@gmail.com) to get some mailed to you! Please submit the results on the Friday before Autumn Profile. More information will be provided about how to submit your results. Check the Public Events page for the most up-to-date information!

(<https://www.facebook.com/events/1350180755538859>) If you have questions, please reach out to Huron Perth Junior Farmers at [huronperthjf@gmail.com](mailto:huronperthjf@gmail.com)



# Summer 2023 Outgoing Delegates

JFAO is incredibly excited to have 4 members traveling as international delegates on exchanges this upcoming summer! Elizabeth Bruce, an Oxford member, will be traveling to Northern Ireland for 3 weeks. Sarah Danen, another member from Oxford, will be spending 3 weeks in the Republic of Ireland. Kelsey Brekelmans from Huron Perth will be in Scotland for 4 weeks. Julie Milne from Peterborough will be spending 6-12 weeks in Switzerland. Stay tuned to see blog posts about their travel experiences!



## Gordie's Story

Gordie, the unofficial teddy bear mascot of the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario, was reunited with his creator on Tuesday, as Jean Bennett, from just south of Bayfield, met with the 80th President of the provincial organization in Seaforth to check in on her nearly-20-year-old stuffed creation.



In late March, Auburn's Jolande Oudshoorn was elected president of the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario, becoming just the third Huron County resident to lead the provincial organization. Bennett, who says she'll soon be turning 91 years old, couldn't believe her eyes when she [saw] the bear she created as part of a fundraiser for the Junior Farmers of Ontario all those years ago.

# Gordie's Story Continued

Bennett has made close to 50 bears over the years, for everything from church fundraisers to family reunions. However, the bear she created for the Junior Farmers in the early 2000s is one that has remained close to her heart. First off, it's bigger than most of the other bears she has created over the years. Second, she and her late husband Art had a long and storied history with agriculture in Ontario and the Junior Farmers. Art passed away last year and was a leader in Ontario agriculture.

When the provincial organization held its 60th annual general meeting, with an auction to go with it, Jean made a bear to be auctioned off that night. The winning bid was \$350 in 2004 and the winning bidder was Allan Orr, the brother of the late Gordon Orr, who was the first-ever president of the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario. Bennett said Allan bought the bear, adorned with a smart red tie and a 2004-dated vest, out of appreciation for his brother and wrote a cheque that night for \$400 for the organization.

Two years later, however, the bear made its way back to the organization. Soon enough, Gordie the bear (so named by Past-President Kurtis Smith).

Bennett's story dates back to 1817 when her ancestors came to Canada from England. They made a life for themselves for years in the Halton region. There, she met Art and they were married. They lived and farmed in that area for nearly 30 years before eventually retiring and seeking out a new home, which is when they found a home just south of Bayfield. They worked at renovating the home for over a decade, getting it up to snuff. Then, one day, all these years later, Bennett was reading her monthly issue of The Rural Voice when she saw a picture of the bear she had created to raise money for the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario nearly 20 years earlier. She saw it and knew she had to get in touch with Oudshoorn, the keeper of the bear.

Bennett said she thought Gordie's tie looked a bit weathered, but that, otherwise, he looked like he was in pretty good shape.

When Bennett knew she would be reunited with her stuffed creation, after reading about its importance to the organization in recent years, she thought it was "just wonderful" and was eager to learn more.

\*\*See full story at <https://www.huroncitizen.ca/>

Shawn Loughlin | Editor | The Citizen | May 12 2023



# March Conference

The 2023 Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario (JFAO) March Conference took place in Kitchener from March 24th to 26th, 2023. Under the conference theme of Channel Surfing, members and recent alumni gathered to network, learn, and usher in the new JFAO year. The weekend began with what might have been JFAO's fastest Annual General Meeting (AGM). Effective and efficient meetings have been an objective of the 2021 and 2022 JFAO executive committees, and this was evident in the day's proceedings. Following the AGM, March Conference officially kicked off with networking opportunities for attendees that were tied into the conference theme. Saturday started bright and early with conference participants departing on a bus tour of local agriculture operations. The highlight of Saturday evening was the 2023 JFAO Annual Banquet. The theme of the evening was Friends and Alyssa Waldroff of Stormont-Glengarry Junior Farmers and 2022 4-H Ontario Representative acted as the master of ceremonies for the evening. At the Annual Banquet, JFAO members and alumni came together to celebrate the achievements of JFAO clubs and members over the past year, to welcome the new JFAO year, and to fundraise for the 2023 JFAO Provincial Charity; the JFAO Endowment Fund. A silent and live auction facilitated by Will Johnson, auctioneer and member of Middlesex Junior Farmers, raised \$1,008 for the JFAO Endowment Fund. March Conference participants came together again on Sunday morning to recap the weekend and participate in workshops on team building and conflict resolution. Thank you to everyone that made March Conference possible!



# MNP

## What is a farm advisor and how they help?

In today's agriculture industry, it's more important than ever to work with an advisor who really gets what's on the line. Whether you are looking for advice on day-to-day challenges or require specific advice on areas such as forward planning, financial projections, cost of production, or examining risk on your farm; a farm advisor is a valuable partner in your farm's decision making process. They work with you on a one-on-one basis to assess your financial operation's strengths and weaknesses with performance targets and analysis in mind.

You might question: how will a 2.25% increase in prime interest rate affect my monthly cashflows? What impact does switching to other crop inputs have on my crop yields and profits? Is my business structured in the most profitable way? I am looking to expand my livestock herd, but unsure of the risks, how can I mitigate that risk? I want to understand the full cost of production of my business, but where do I start? Advisors are here to help you answer this ever-changing list of questions.

In a commodity sector where farmgate prices are volatile and input prices are on the rise, farm planning is more important now than ever. Most likely, your farming operation is more capital intensive, incurring higher revenues than the generation before you. With that comes higher risk, and managing that risk becomes even more critical. With an early diagnosis, advisors can mitigate potential problems, find areas for growth, and guide your business toward your goals.

## MNP's approach

At MNP, our farm advisors visit your farm, seeing your operation firsthand, which is essential to confirm that our financial advice makes sense. Regular follow-ups are provided to account for new opportunities and challenges that arise in an ever-changing marketplace. With our financial modelling tools in hand, we start taking out the guesswork for these very important and difficult decisions. In no time, you will start to see your business through a new lens – which areas are profitable, drive profitability down, and which areas you should focus on. The value of this information is critical for the sustainability of your farm, and to safeguard your personal and professional future.

## MNP's services and solutions

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To find out how MNP can help your specific needs, contact Will Sheard at 647.338.8961 or [will.sheard@mnp.ca](mailto:will.sheard@mnp.ca). Check out the Winter newsletter for our next topic: AgriStability.



The image shows a map of Southern Ontario with various office locations marked by red dots and labels. To the right of the map is a list of these locations with their corresponding phone numbers. At the bottom left is the MNP logo, and at the bottom right is the slogan 'Wherever business takes you' next to the MNP.ca website address.

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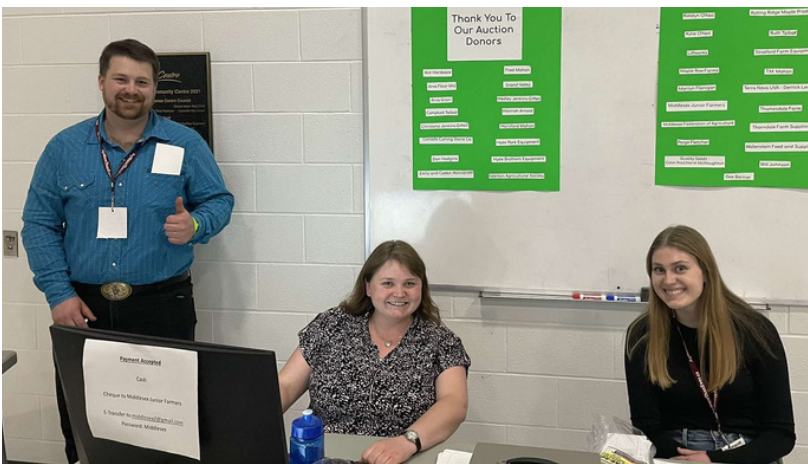
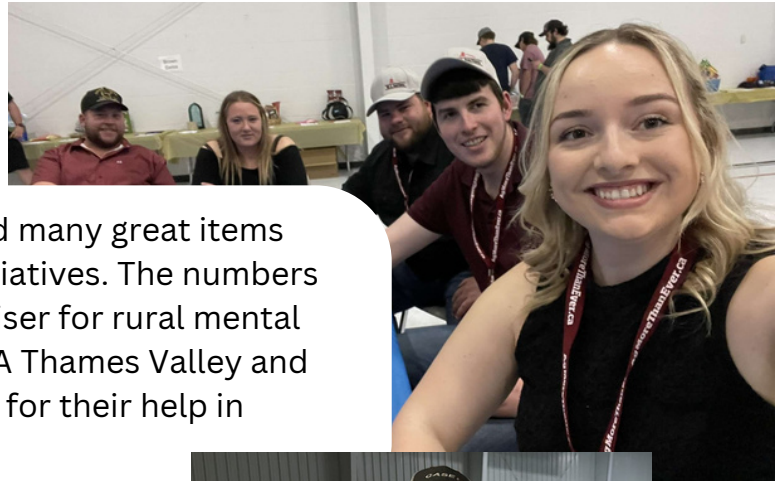
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# Farmers Night Out

In April the Middlesex Junior Farmers hosted their 2nd Annual Farmers' Night Out and it was a great evening! Lots of socializing and dancing and many great items were bought in support of rural mental health initiatives. The numbers are in and they raised \$4,225 at this year's fundraiser for rural mental health. This money is being split 50/50 with CMHA Thames Valley and Three Oaks Respite Cabin. Thank you to everyone for their help in making this happen!



## Leamington SMV Sign Exchange

On April 1st we held an SMV sign exchange at the Peavey Mart in Leamington and exchanged 18 signs! We also had everyone who exchanged a sign put their name in a hat and had the store manager pull a name at the end of the event to see who won a \$50 Peavey Mart Card. Congratulations to the winner, Jesse Driedger! The Essex - Kent Junior Farmers would like to thank Shane and his staff at the Leamington Peavey Mart and also the Essex County Federation of Agriculture (ECFA) for their support.



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# Club Reports

## Haldimand-Norfolk

Haldimand-Norfolk Junior Farmers have been busy! We helped Norfolk County Fair with their new wash rack, helped direct traffic at the Norfolk Ram Rodeo, and attended the Caledonia Fair's new Heritage Games event. We put our food booth in the Norfolk County Fair as we do every year and there was a great turnout again! We tried our share in doing a SMV sign exchange day and it was a huge success!! We had 74 signs brought in and exchanged. We hope to make this a yearly event switching between Haldimand and Norfolk counties.



## Huron Perth

Huron Perth Junior Farmers had a busy first quarter. We held winter games this year, which was a first for most of the committee and we are very proud of the members who stepped up to make it a success. We also appreciate everything Tina Wark did to help and guide us along the way. March was fairly eventful as we were able to see results from our "who let the hogs out" fundraiser and drop off two butchered pigs to food banks within the Huron and Perth counties.

We also had several members and a couple alumni attend march conference where we won club of the year, the communication award for best collage of photos and favourite JF memory. .



Kirsten McIntosh won the rose award for outstanding novice member and Lauren Bos won the rose award for outstanding member. We enjoyed watching as the new executives took up their roles, and our club's past president Jolande Oudsschoorn became the new president of JFAO

We'd like to recognize our alumni Crystal and Patti Blake for their help at the Canadian Dairy Expo. After a few years away we were able to get back this year and promote Junior Farmer with our apple fritter booth.



We have an exciting announcement within our club Luke Splettstoesser has finally been released from the hospital after close to 6 months and is eager to return to the club.

# Club Reports

## Oxford

These past couple of months have been busy for Oxford JF, but with the warm weather in the air, things have slowed down in the JF world, as our members are busy in the fields! March was our busiest month by far, with an event almost every weekend! Oxford JF put in a team at the Annual Rocklyn Hockey Tournament put on by Grey JF. Although we didn't win, our club thoroughly enjoyed playing hockey and the dance! We had 6 members attend March Conference. Oxford JF is proud to be the 2022 Agricultural Club of the Year. It was a fun weekend filled with tours, the dance, and the annual banquet, where we recognized the hard-working members in the province!



Our March social, was a surprise going-away party for two of our members who are working abroad for the next couple of months, Natasha Bolender is working in Australia and Seth Martin is working in Alberta. Our social for April was rock climbing in Cambridge at the Core Climbing Gym. It was a super fun night climbing cliffs and realizing that we aren't as fit as we thought. On Earth Day, our club along with a 4-H club, spent the morning cleaning up trash at Roth Park in Woodstock. It was a very rainy day but that didn't stop us from picking up lots of garbage! The next couple of months seem to be pretty quiet but Oxford JF is excited to announce that the Embro Truck and Tractor Pull is back again this summer, from August 4-5! Hope to see you there!



## Grey

Grey has had a great kickoff to the year. We ran our first Ladies Night in January (stay tuned to our Facebook page for next year's theme!), and a very successful Mental Health Awareness Night in conjunction with the Meaford Knights hockey club! Grey County's annual hockey tournament was impressively full at 12 teams, and are so thankful to those who braved the winter storm to end the night at the dance! We have taken an easy slow spring, as most of our members are busy in the fields getting ready and planted. June 3rd we are hosting, alongside Grey County Beef Association a locally provided beef dinner and dance at the Rocklyn Hall! Tickets are still available, for those interested - please reach out to a Grey member you may know! As a club, we are anticipating the hype behind the new delegates, and are looking forward to giving them a piece of Grey County to take back home with them.



# Trick or Treat

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# Announcements:



Congratulations to JFAO members Adam Clark (Huron-Perth) recently got engaged.

## Century Farm Signs

Is your farm eligible? See for yourself!

Head on over to

<https://www.jfao.on.ca/resources/century-farm-sign>

Contact Nic Willemsma, Director of Community and International Programs, for more information at [nic@jfao.on.ca](mailto:nic@jfao.on.ca)



## Gate Signs

The Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario (JFAO) is pleased to offer gate signs. Gate signs can be proudly displayed at the end of your driveway or as part of your farm gate display. There are two sign options including, "Alumni Lives Here" and "Member Lives Here". Due to the popularity of the gate signs, JFAO has extended the availability through an online store (click [here](#)). This is your chance to show your support and pride of JFAO!

Once you have your sign installed, share a photo with us on social media using the #ProudJFer hashtag or email [meghan@jfao.on.ca](mailto:meghan@jfao.on.ca). Select photos may be chosen to be featured on the JFAO website or marketing materials



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