

## Plan for the transition

## Verdict expected today



RACHEL FABER/CORNWALL STANDARD-FREEHOLDER

Andrew, left, and Steven Byvelds at the family's farm last week. Andrew plans on taking over the farm from his parents.

### A tricky farm conversation— how to pass along the business to the next generation

RACHEL FABER  
STANDARD-FREEHOLDER

WILLIAMSBURG – For Steven and Andrew Byvelds, succession planning for their farm is a sort of distant fog slowly creeping into their line of sight.

Like a lot of farming families, they've talked about it sporadically, but nothing is yet set in stone and nothing is on paper.

There are 193,492 working farms in Canada, according to 2016 census data, and only a tiny 8.4 per cent of those farms have written succession plans. There are a lot of farm families who have verbal or presumed succession plans, but the vast majority has no plan at all.

In the tone of their voices, it's unmistakable that Steven and Andrew are father and son, walking around their property discussing farm equipment and the weather. Together, they farm just over 525 hectares (1,300 acres) of corn and soybean crops with little extra help — which can be fairly typical for farmers across the country.

The number of active farmers

in Canada sits at 271,935 according to Statistics Canada, meaning that there is an average of 1.4 farmers operating each farm. While the number of farmers is on the decline, the land size of each farm is increasing — from an average of 315 hectares (779 acres) in 2011 to 331 hectares (820 acres) in 2016 — which means there are fewer farmers doing more work to keep up with demand.

For now, the Byvelds' plan is to work together until Andrew is ready for full control and Steven, 57, is ready to retire. More than half of farmers in the country are over the age of 55, with only nine per cent under age 35.

"Any discussions we've had, he's been in no hurry," said Steven of his 30-year-old son, "This summer we thought it was time to at least have a look at it and have his mother and myself talk about what our expectations are."

When Steven took over the same farm from his dad years ago, he began to push the conversation when he was about 24, and owned the whole farm by the time he was 31.

Since then the farm has grown significantly in size, but because of the advancement of farm equipment, said Steven, the workload is similar.

See **TRANSITION** | A3

## OPG wants to build storage facility

TODD HAMBLETON  
STANDARD-FREEHOLDER

A community meeting will be held just under two weeks to discuss an Ontario Power Generation project for the R.H. Saunders Generating Station in Cornwall that will involve the use of a battery-based energy storage facility.

Ontario Power Generation wants to build the facility adjacent to the dam, which would be used to absorb energy in times of excess system generation, or release energy in times of a system generation shortfall.

The meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 19, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the auditorium at the St. Lawrence Power Development Visitor Centre, at 2500B Secont St. W.

"Battery Energy Storage complements renewable generation like wind and solar, and will help (the Independent Electricity System Operator) maintain system reliability," said OPG director of media, issues and information management Neal Kelly.



LOIS ANN BAKER/CORNWALL STANDARD-FREEHOLDER

The Moses-Saunders Power Dam in Cornwall, as seen in this file photo from March.

"OPG is an innovative company and is always looking for ways to bring new technologies into the electricity market to benefit customers.

"The project will enable the IESO to maintain the reliability of the Ontario electrical system by smoothing out short-term fluctuations in load and generation."

The OPG wants to submit a proposal to the IESO's Request for Proposals (RFP) for Incremental Regulation Service.

Regulation service is used by the IESO to match total system generation to total system load and helps correct variations in power system frequency. The service is provided by dedicated facilities

that can adjust their setpoint in a short period of time, in response to an Automatic Generation Control signal sent by the IESO. The IESO currently schedules 100 megawatt of Regulation Service each hour, but needs additional regulation capacity to help maintain system reliability. To obtain additional Regulation Service capacity, the IESO is holding a competitive procurement for an added 50 MW.

In essence, if it's successful, the battery energy storage facility in Cornwall would push electricity into the grid when needed during peak times, and then recharge the batteries from the dam during periods of lower demand. This could be a more efficient way of boosting available power than, say, a natural-gas power plant that would fire up only at peak times.

Should OPG's regulation service project be awarded a contract, it would need to obtain all required permits and approvals, and conduct any further community engagement activities.

See **STORAGE** | A2

ALAN S. HALE  
STANDARD-FREEHOLDER

The fate of a man accused of sexually assaulting a young relative almost 20 years ago is now in the hands of Justice Laurie Lacelle after the lawyers for the defence and Crown made their final arguments in court on Thursday.

Defence lawyer Michael Spratt argued the entirety of the Crown's case against his client — who cannot be identified because of a publication ban — is based on the testimony of the alleged victim of the case.

The complainant's story, said Spratt, has not been corroborated in any way by other witnesses and was riddled with discrepancies and evidence of ulterior motives.

"This is not the kind of evidence that is safe in any way to found a conviction on," Spratt told Justice Lacelle. "The court should be seriously concerned about the credibility and reliability of his evidence, and it should raise a doubt in your mind."

One of the biggest discrepancies in the complainant's testimony highlighted by the defence was that he said he was a different age every time he described the assault to the police (he said he was 17), during the preliminary inquiry (16), and during the trial itself, where he said he was 15.

When confronted with this during cross examination, the complainant said he had not put a case together against the accused and so had not worked out the exact timeline of the assault which he said had taken place more than 15 years prior. Spratt said this was demonstratively untrue because the complainant had provided documents to police, which the defence argued was him preparing a case.

During the preliminary inquiry the complainant had admitted to having lucid dreams where he had been sexually assaulted by another male family member, Spratt pointed out, although the victim said the assault by the accused had been real.

Then there was the letter the complainant had written to the accused, asking he admit what he had done and pay him \$40,000 or he would go to the police or seek redress through either the civil courts or the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Spratt argued the letter was an attempt at extortion and the complainant had gone to police because the defendant had refused to pay him.

Assistant Crown counsel Matthew Collins began his submissions trying warding off the criticisms levelled at the complainant and the evidence he gave.

Collins admitted the letter the complainant sent asking for money looks bad, even though the complainant said he was trying to get the accused to pay for counselling and rehabilitation for mental health problems he's suffered since the alleged assault. This was not made explicit in the letter, however.

See **COURT** | A2



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