

**National Agriculture Union Equal Opportunities Committee Meeting
December 4-5, 2006
Minutes**

In attendance:

Marianne Hladun, National EO Director
Howard Willems, 4th National Vice-President
Suzanne Saumur, Ontario Regional Rep
Angie Chudy, Saskatchewan Regional Rep
Janet Edwards, Manitoba/NW Ontario Regional Rep
Jane McDonald, Atlantic Regional Rep
Sylvia Prowse, Service Officer
Jennie Chu, BC Regional Rep
Terri Lee, Alternate National EO Director
Diane Bouchard, Quebec Regional Rep

Introductions were done around the table and Marianne gave an overview of what to expect during the meetings. The agenda was discussed. Marianne pointed out the need to elect a new co-ordinator as the previous Co-ordinator was no longer on the committee. She reviewed the duties required of the Co-ordinator.

Marianne introduced Howard Willems, 4th NVP for Agriculture Union. Howard brought greetings from National President Yves Ducharme and 1st NVP Bob Kingston. Howard reviewed the structure of the National Council. The meetings are held twice a year and typically three days in length with issues from the regions get rolled into that meeting. Bob Kingston is responsible for OSH & Collective Bargaining, Debbie Forsythe is responsible for Finance and Communication, Denis Sicard is responsible for Education & By-Laws, and Howard is responsible for the General Committee which has the mandate for all issues outside of the other 3 Standing Committees.

Agriculture Union Finance & Communications Committee has developed a new orientation manual and orientation kits. These are in a user friendly format to give out to members. It's purpose is to ensure that local executives take the time to discuss the union and its role in the workplace especially to new members.

Howard provided an update on the roles and responsibilities of National Office staff as well as updates on the AAFC EG Review and the CFIA PI/EG Review.

National EO Report:

Sylvia has arranged for Alan Pryde (Communications Consultants) to attend the EO meeting to take photos for the webpage and to join a discussion on a national EO newsletter.

Marianne reviewed some of the issues that she has been involved with, these included the maternity/paternity issues. This morning, she met with Joy Smith, a Conservative MP from Manitoba to discuss the issue of human trafficking and was also able to bring forward concerns regarding the cuts to the Status of Women and the elimination and/or downsizing of public services. In general, she spends time lobbying MPs, writing articles for websites, providing assistance with locals on EO issues and is currently consulting with CFIA for the joint delivery of harassment training for CFIA employees. She also takes issues forward to PSAC-EOC. She discussed the issue of joint harassment training for CFIA. She indicated that there were problems in getting a response from the employer to set up training to deliver the training. Facilitators will be chosen from Union and Management like the Joint Learning Program for Treasury Board workplaces. She mentioned that they are targeting areas of need first.

She also mentioned that JLP offers training as well. Jennie raised concerns about effective training in the workplace. Marianne responded that where possible, the facilitators will not be from that workplace. The design means that everyone participates. It will be about analysing situations to decide whether it is a harassment situation.

The issue of returning maternity benefits to the employer was mentioned again by Sylvia Prowse. Members of the committee were told to make their members aware that this situation may occur going into or coming out of CFIA.

PSAC Equal Opportunities Committee Report – Terri Lee:

Terri gave a description of the membership of the PSAC EOC. There are 18 component representatives and 8 equity representatives, 1 male and 1 female from each of the four equity groups. The EOC is chaired by Robyn Benson and Ed Cashman. The committee is there to assist us. Issues currently being discussed and actioned by the EOC include:

National Childcare Program: there are lobby kits available.

Childcare Advocacy Program: Electronic petition.

Protective Reassignment for Pregnant Women

There are also a number of National PSAC Conferences coming up:

Health & Safety: January 18-21, 2007 - Ottawa

Pride Conference: March 29- April 1, 2007 – Vancouver

Access Conference: September 6-9, 2007 Ottawa

National Women's Conference: November 22-25, 2007 – Toronto

Racially Visible Conference: March 6-9, 2008 Montreal

Aboriginal Conference: September 18-21, 2008 Winnipeg

There will be callouts for the organizing and resolution committees.

Discussion too place as to who funds observers. Observers are funded by locals normally but funding assistance can also come from components as well.

Marianne reviewed the process for applying for PSAC Conferences. All delegates are fully funded. Delegates are selected based on % of Component in PSAC ie. 9000 of 110,000 this is 8% therefore 8% of the delegates would be from that component. You MUST get applications in by the deadline. There are no extensions or second chances. Make sure people check off their interest in being an observer box otherwise they may not be chosen should observer seats be made available. Applications go to Human Rights Branch of PSAC and are entered into a spreadsheet. This list is sent to all of the Component offices. In Agriculture, applicants are first ranked by the National President then forwarded to the National EO Director for review before being sent back to the Human Rights Branch. The delegates accepted by the components are then taken off and the remaining lists are sent to each REVP who makes decisions for those to be selected for the Regions.

Terri mentioned that the Agriculture Union does not always know who has been selected in particular the members that are selected by the REVP's. Marianne mentioned that we should institute a communication from the union indicating that if you have been selected by Agriculture Union and you need to submit a report even if it is one page.

ACTION:

Jane and Marianne to work on a communique for delegates to PSAC Equity Conferences.

Equal marriage lobby kits are available and there is supposed to be a vote this week in parliament about whether the issue will be reintroduced in the House of Commons.

There is also a postcard campaign dealing with December 6th. Please encourage your locals to send them out and also send one to Minister Bev Oda and Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

ACTION:

All Regional Reps will distribute the postcards to their locals.

The cuts to the Status of Women offices by the Conservative government were discussed. The Status of Women are not allowed to do advocacy.

There is excitement about the progress of the federal Anti-Scab legislation.

The Social Justice Fund is funding Labour Tours to countries such as India and Columbia. These tours are to meet with labour leaders and raise visibility of labour issues.

Communications:

Alan Pryde, Communications Consultants arrived to take individual photos for the website as well as a group picture. Alan suggested that for a national EO newsletter that we pre-print letterhead in color and then the newsletter text would be in black which could be photocopied to reduce costs. He suggested that it be no more than 2-4 pages. He indicated that a person shouldn't have to spend more than 5-10 minutes going through it or they won't read it. As Alan is a consultant, he would need approval of the Executive before he could do any further consultation on our newsletter. The newsletter will be sent to the local's EO contact for distribution.

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference were reviewed with some minor changes (see attached).

It was reiterated that we should be lobbying government at all levels on EO/Human Rights issues affecting our members and our committees. Marianne asked who had taken advanced training in Human Rights. In discussions with the National President, he suggested that he would be willing to ask the PSAC Standing Education Committee if we could take the training as a group.

ACTION:

Marianne to request, through Howard, that the National President consult with the PSAC Standing Education Committee that we be approved to take the PSAC Human Rights course as a group.

Many regions are currently developing their 3-year Education plans. Regional EO Reps should be involved in the consultation.

It was asked if there were notes on past presentations. This would help the new members of the committee.

ACTION:

Marianne will review the powerpoint presentation that was developed several years ago, update as required and distribute to current Committee members.

Janet asked for lists of specific EO training from the PSAC. There is no specific list but we should call the Regional Offices and ask them if there are any training courses coming up that we should take. Marianne suggested that if a course called "Building an Inclusive Union" is offered that all Regional Reps should attend.

Regional EO Budgets:

Regional budget requests need to be in by the end of the month and should be realistic and achievable. Regional reps should take a good look at their region and develop a

plan that works for that specific region. Expenses for this year must be in by the end of December.

Communication with Locals:

Regional EO Reps should contact their RVP if locals are not responding. Regional EO Reps have full authority to contact locals directly on EO issues.

Each local should have an identified EO contact as per the By-Laws. Sylvia will confer with the National Office to ensure that all Regional Reps get local contact information for their area.

ACTION:

Sylvia will request that Christine send out a local contact list to Regional Reps.

Honorariums:

Honorariums are currently 1 year in arrears.

ACTION:

Howard and/or Sylvia will contact Larry Budge regarding getting the honorariums current.

Regarding budgets, if alternates attend meetings or functions on behalf of the Regional Rep, they can submit an expense claim.

Reviewed National work plan. (left this at home too. Uggh!)

Promotional Materials:

There were suggestions for promotional materials:

- Thermo mugs
- Eye glass cleaners
- Hand painted mugs
- Water bottles
- Visor pockets
- Umbrellas
- Pottery

COMMUNICATIONS:

The process to have items posted on the website is to send them to Marianne.

ACTION:

Regional EO Reps should contact their RVP upon their return to update them on discussions from the meeting. Whenever you send an e-mail or a letter to locals, you should copy the RVP. Keeping the RVP involved and educated will make resolutions at convention much easier to support.

Discussions took place on the "Orientation/Information binder" as to whether it is useful. There was discussion about doing it electronically through the National website. The thought was that each of us would focus on an equity group.

Women: Jane, Suzanne
Aboriginal: Jennie
Persons With Disabilities: Angie
Racially Visible: Janet
Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgendered: Janet

Diane will help all groups by researching French websites and resources.

Regional EO Rep reports are due by February 15th. The report should detail your activities such as who have you met with, who have you sponsored, what contacts have you made and where has regional funding been spent. If you are having difficulties with a local, include that in your report, ie. Local 22 won't return your calls.

ACTION:

The Coordinator will send a reminder for regional reports at the end of January.

National newsletter will be printed as needed. A pdf version will be available on the website as well as rtf format files that can be used by voice recognition or computer software. We will talk about ideas for the first one.

Guide to an Inclusive Local:

As part of the National Council Strategic Planning session, National Council has asked the EO Committee to prepare a "Guide to an Inclusive Local". Marianne has started to draft the document.

ACTION:

Marianne will get the draft translated then send to the committee for their review. The translated draft will be presented to the General Standing Committee during the April National Council meeting.

Youth Participation:

The General Standing Committee has been asked to develop a youth strategy for the Agriculture Union. Marianne asked Regional Reps to think about why youth are not participating and how we can encourage them to become involved.

ACTION:

Regional EO Reps should consult with locals and forward suggested activities for a youth strategy to Marianne prior to the April National Council meeting.

Update on "Back to EO Basics" training:

Marianne attended 6 of the 7 Regional Seminars. Quebec was not included because of the language barrier. She described her experiences across the country as mostly favourable.

Resolutions will be prepared at the next annual meeting of the EO committee for the Convention in 2008.

Regional Reports

Atlantic:

Jane attended a number of meetings throughout the Atlantic. Sean Glavine spoke at our Regional Seminar about the NAIM Network. Jane attended the AAFC Working group for the Employment Equity workplan for 2006-2009. She is also the Treasurer of the Annapolis Valley Regional Women's committee and they are holding a vigil in Berwick for the Violence Against Women on December 6th. She also participates on the AAFC Diversity committee. She also plans on having a multicultural Pot-Luck for Human Rights Day on December 12. She also donated prizes and co-ordinated National Public Service week celebrations.

Manitoba:

Janet Edwards indicated that her RVP Sam Barlin has been supportive and talks about EO when he goes to AGM meetings. She has never been personally invited. She has sent letters, distributed calendars and aboriginal pins but never receives a response. She attended the CLC Women's Conference on behalf of the Agriculture Union and found it to be an uplifting experience. She attended the National Council of Visible Minorities meeting and handed out pamphlets. She has also been writing newsletters for specific special days.

Saskatchewan:

Angie Chudy has visited a couple of locals. Her goal this year is to visit Moose Jaw as they have a new President. She passes along information of various equity days. Throughout the year she attended a December 6th vigil on Campus and a Missing Aboriginal women service which was very touching. Agriculture Union through the regional EO funding helped co-sponsor this event. She attended International Women's Day Symposium and subsidized other members to attend. The hot topic was crystal-Meth, and other topics included Wills & Estates, Breast Cancer and Total Wellness. She gave away Binders, shirts and water bottles. For the Saskatchewan Regional Seminar, she had an Aboriginal Elder attend to speak on the issue of treaties. She sits on various committees and distributes information as events arise.

Ontario- Suzanne Saumur:

To date, has helped specific individuals with their issues. She will try to raise awareness through the website and will network more in the future.

Quebec - Diane Bouchard:

She is a member of her local executive as well as many other committees. She indicated that she needs to multitask and do more than one thing at a time. She indicated that we need to be aggressive and to seek out people to make our point. She sent letters, became involved and made a video. She indicated that we need to educate and be patient. Talked about a play being funded by CFIA, she will try to get a copy for us to view.

British Columbia - Jennie Chu:

Her regional plan is posted on the back of her newsletter. Her job is to educate & promote awareness and engage people to work towards Equal Opportunities. She has a team to work with which makes her job easier. She is involved in the political arena and Chinese New Year celebrations, the aboriginals participate and are well received. There seemed to be some negativity at the Regional Seminar towards EO, Marianne and Terry attended Jennie was unavailable. Jennie reviewed many events attended throughout the year. Her annual Human Rights Forum will be held shortly. There will be six speakers. All equity groups will be represented.

Marianne passed out a petition dealing with Human Trafficking and a contact list for all members.

Administration: Claim for salary for Sunday thru Wednesday inclusive. Receipts are required for hotels, taxis and parking. Meal allotments are: Breakfast \$12.75, Lunch \$12.15 Supper \$ 34.75, Incidentals \$17.30. Total \$76.95. Fax a copy of expense claim to Marianne when you send it to Larry. Anything on the work plan is pre approved.

EO Committee Co-ordinator. Jane McDonald volunteered, was nominated and seconded. Many offered to help if necessary. The position will be on the agenda for future years and can be addressed again if necessary.

Local EO Contacts: Resolution was passed. Every local must have an EO Rep. Terri suggested a standardized form for filling out to keep the listing up-to-date.

Marianne suggested calling presidents to get current information for EO Reps for locals. Make a list of locals with EO contacts. Phone number, home e-mail, work e-mail and mailing address. Send this information to Marianne as soon as possible. Local contact lists contain personal information so they are not for distribution. The EO network list will be used to distribute information.

We talked about what types of things the local EO rep can do. Suggestions were:

- Help publicize the special days of the year.

- Help organize events or find events in their community that we can help with.

- Help organize the special day the EO committee has chosen to focus on.

- Contact in the community for events that we should participate in.

- Create their own contact list for information distribution.

- Send information "up the line", i.e. topics for newsletter.

Marianne and Sylvia will check on By-Laws. It was suggested that everyone read the By-Laws particularly those regulations dealing with EO. Marianne will format an introductory letter to make them feel welcome. We will aim to have a contact from each local by the end of January or the middle of February.

Activities 2007

There will be \$1000/ region to celebrate a special day. We have decided to do the Human Rights Day again December 10, 2007.

Discussion took place on something that can be distributed at conferences.

We have a responsibility to encourage better participation at conferences and encourage people to attend Regional Seminars.

We have tentatively scheduled a conference call for February 22, 2007 at 8:00 pm Ottawa Time.

Went around the table talking about some of the ideas that we used in presentations to help reps from Quebec and Ontario. Things mentioned were speakers, personal experiences, mimicking blind or disabled, videos or movies. Possible resources for these might be the National, Provincial Human Rights Commissions and the National Film Board. Look at the timing schedule, try to schedule before lunch so there is more time for discussion. Have a discussion with RVP to see if they want anything discussed.

Ideas for Newsletter

- Profile Region or group
- Mandate- Who we are, Why we are here.
- Official Launch at Regional Seminars
- Tribute to Maria Blair
- Profile of a member in a local who has a story.

Information on the Maria Blair case: Marianne basically laid out the scenario for us. Are there other instances of this happening throughout the country? "Fitness for Work" treating as disciplinary action. Documents are available on Publiservice that explains the Fitness for Work Policy (Health Canada Document). Discussion took place on making others aware of this to make sure that others aren't being treated similarly.

Let H&S committees know about this. It seems to be a new way for managers to abuse employees.

Discussion took place on the Health evaluations to see if you are fit for work. Howard mentioned that the only way they can send for Health Evaluation is based on a Job

Hazard Analysis. Marianne asked Howard to take it to the National Health & Safety Committee.

Discussions took place on the refusal of locals to have EO presentations. If it can't be resolved then the RVP needs to be made aware of the situation

There was more discussions surrounding the honorariums, Marianne will look into it and notify us.

Thanks were expressed to all for cooperation. It helps to make the whole process easy.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm December 5, 2006.

** Note: For February meeting; discuss when to plan the next annual EO meeting.
Possible transition ie. 2007 – September June 2008 (election year?)