

GROWING **Opportunities**

SMALL FARMS
CHALLENGE

Your BIG Opportunity to
Dream SMALL.....

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Can you imagine...
an ideal rural life?
...children exploring
the woods,
families working
together... making ends
meet and more?



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- In January 2004, the Agriculture Committee of the Turtle Mountain Community Development Corporation released a book *Successful Small Farms*.
- David Neufeld (chair), David Rourke, Brian Hammond, Scott Day, Cathey Day, Ruth Mealy, Tyler King, Henry Dueck, Glenn Hicks and Carl Cunningham.



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- The committee continues to explore issues of re-generating rural populations and small farm viability and decided that a ‘business proposal competition’ would be a creative idea



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- There needs to be some ‘building’ of community in rural areas - within rural communities – among farmers generally and between farmers and urban people.
- This is a missing element within the globalized model of agriculture.



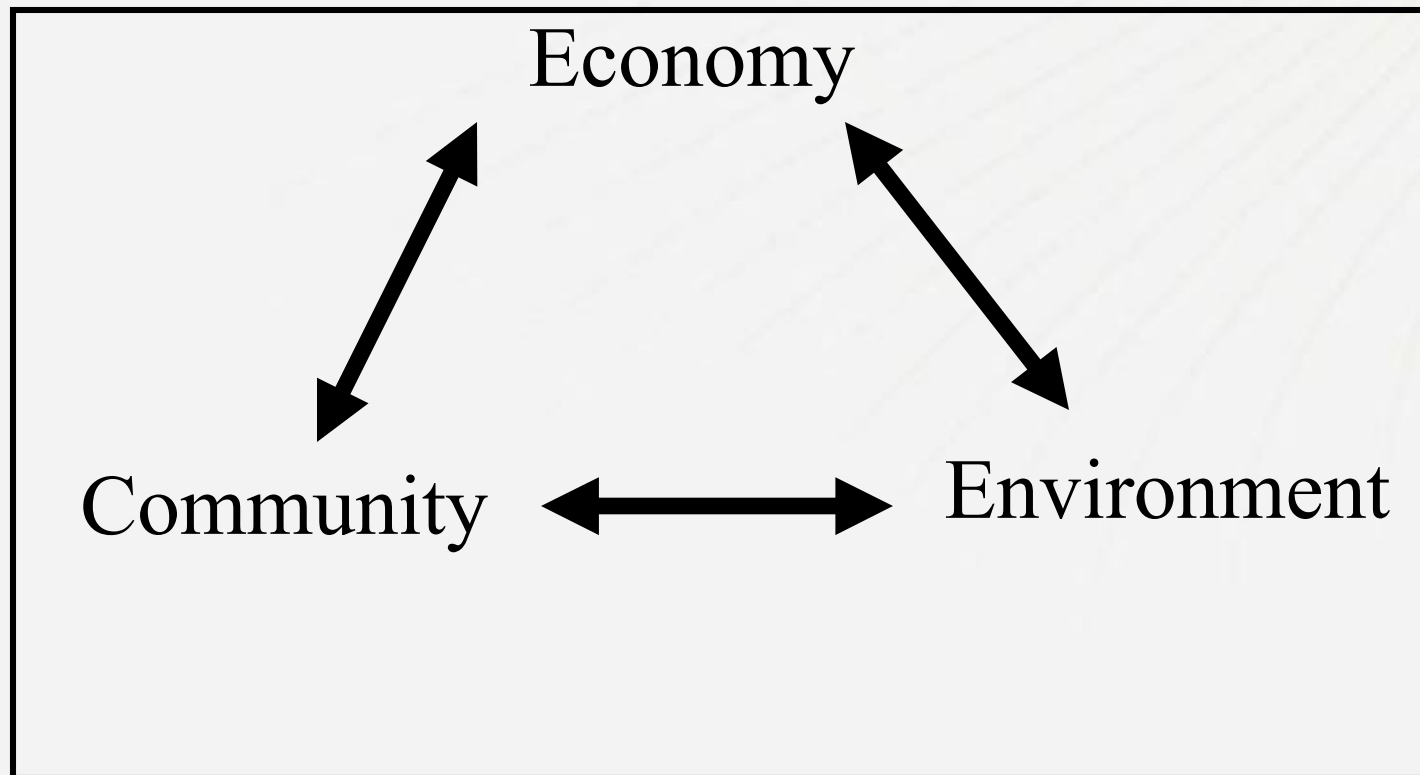
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- We want the Small Farms Challenge to encourage and foster a sense of control and a means to achieve new opportunities for rural people and farmers.

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- David Neufeld...
"Farming like we have for the past 50 years does not serve the interests of community or culture"

Sustainable Development



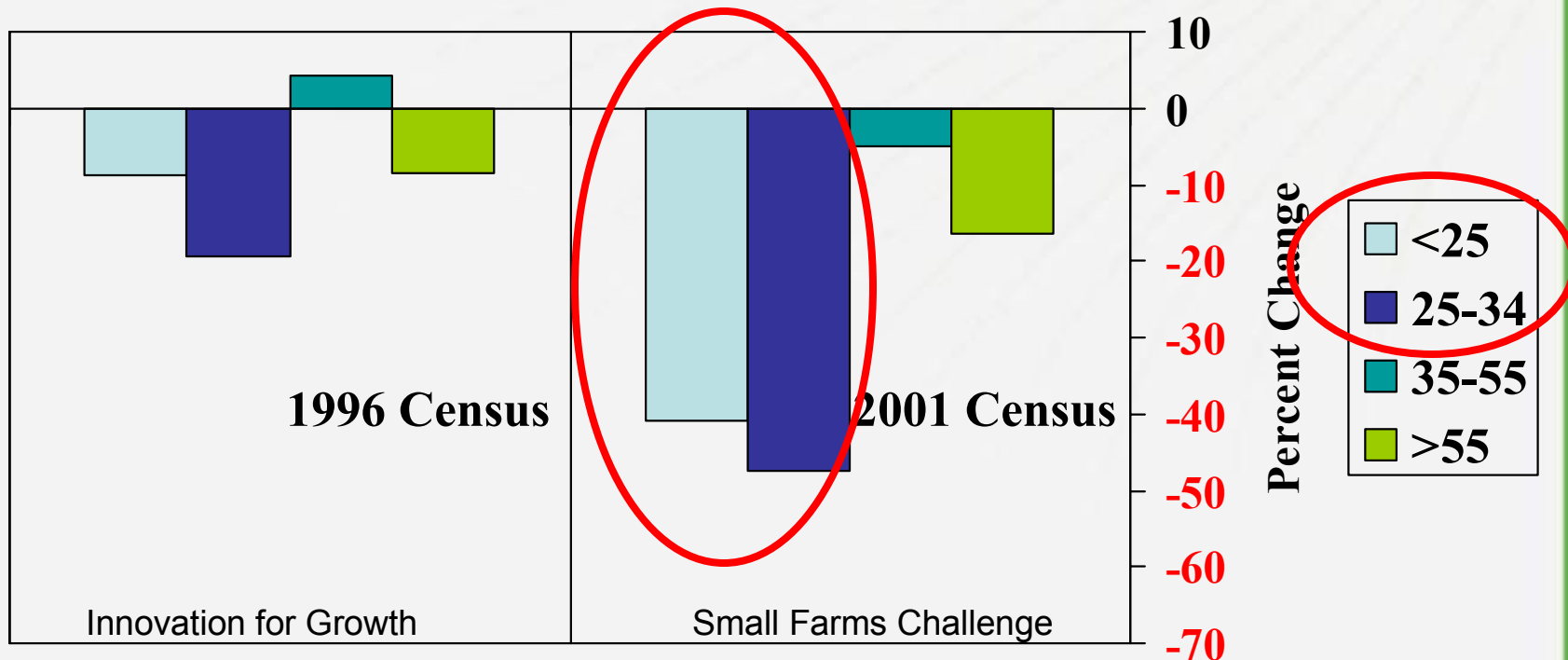
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“The great creator has put ores and oil on this earth to give us a breathing spell...as we exhaust them, we must be prepared to fall back on our farms...the true storehouse which can never be exhausted. For we can learn to synthesize materials for every human need from the things we grow.”

George Washington Carver 1864-1943

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% Change in Farmer Age Groups (from 1991 Census Base)





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**The core challenge for
rural communities is to....**

build a sense of community



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C O U N T R Y S I D E

LAND • PEOPLE • COMMUNITY

Reduced living expenses and focus on reducing, not incurring debt gives couple bright outlook

Nesbitt couple pursue small-scale alternative to farming

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON
FIW staff

Shelley McIvor calls it the best gift anyone could give — at least to her. Soon to be married, she recently received a crate of chickens from friends at her recent wedding shower.

"It was perfect for me," says McIvor. After all, they used to give chickens and cows to newlyweds going homesteading.

You might call what she and fiancé Dwayne Logan are doing near Nesbitt a modern-day homesteading — sans the hardship.

The couple is setting up on 340 acres, land Dwayne bought after his father, who'd rented it, retired from grain farming.

The couple has purchased a small trailer as their first home, intent to build a better place for the family they want to have. They're eyeing straw bale home designs.

"If you're smaller scale, you're keeping more of your profits. And your expenses are

sure pushing out, rather than encouraging in, young farmers like themselves.

Low cost living

Logan established himself here seven years before McIvor came to live here in spring of 2005. Raised on a Portage la Prairie dairy farm, she was working in Winnipeg when she met Logan over the Internet.

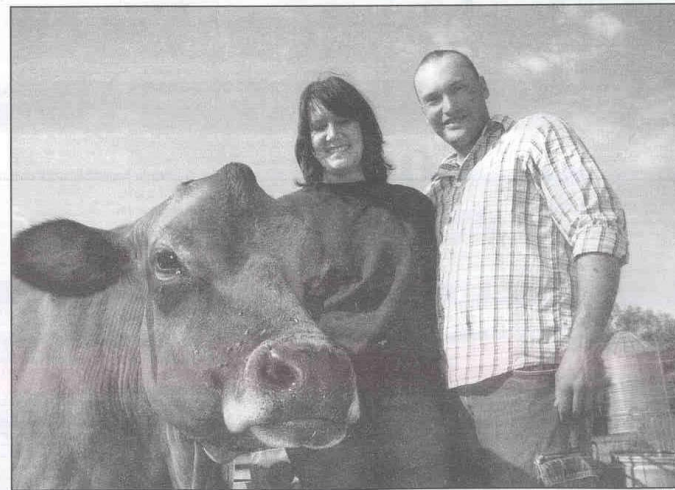
Logan grew up on the family's nearby grain and cattle farm. He wanted to farm his whole life, he says, but didn't see a future for his parents' kind of family farm.

"My dad retired from grain farming because it wasn't working," says Logan. But those tough years focused the young man's mind. What he was after, says Logan, was a new strategy. He will not become beholden to a bank, nor input suppliers, and he's not going to see the farm's profits eaten off it by incurred expenses.

That strategy, he says, is summed up in about a dozen words: "You lower your expenses first, before you start increasing your income."

To that end, he started in transition to organic, to avoid the input costs, and has been paying down the mortgage on the land as fast as he can.

Determined he wasn't going to incur years of debt purchasing new farm equipment, he found



LORRAINE STEVENSON

SIMPLY FARMING: Shelley McIvor and Dwayne Logan, getting married in October, are determined to establish themselves comfortably on a small, diversified organic farm just west of Nesbitt. One focus of their lifestyle is food self-sufficiency, gained through access to plenty of farm produce, including rich milk from their one Jersey cow.

the most profitable aspect of the farm, say the couple, but they've diversified into other types of livestock, so that they

The farm generates enough revenue, that they don't have to seek off-farm employment.

How? They run their home the way they run the farm — keep-

tion to make — like working off-farm.

"We're comfortable," says Logan. "We've chosen our lifestyle. If we want to go out of

Innovation for Growth

Small Farms Challenge

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Promotion

- Work with Universities & Colleges closely
- Young folks at schools; Young urban folks; Urban folks that grew up on farms; Folks living & working here with 'novel' ideas in their heads; Larger farmers who want to 'downsize' gracefully; entrepreneurial folks; retired people
- We would appreciate 25 'good' entries

Submit a plan covering

- Land
- People
- Energy
- Business
- Marketing

Small Farms Challenge Partners

(to date)

- Turtle Mountain CDC
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives
- Farmer's Independent Weekly
- RM of Morton & Town of Boissevain
- Small Farm Canada
- Ag Quest Inc.

Small Farm Challenge Partners continued....

- Turtle Mountain Conservation District
- Assiniboine Community College
- University of Manitoba
- Heifer International
- Manitoba Eco Network
- Boissevain and District Chamber of Commerce
- Several local donors

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- Timeline:
- Farm Focus 2006 – Launch Small Farms CHALLENGE!
- Reversing the Trend – Feb 23 & 24/07 –
 - Announce Small Farm Challenge Winners!!
- December 1, 2006 – Deadline
- Compile Ideas in a “Book” format

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For more information:

- Turtle Mountain Community Development Corporation:
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