

## County supports Food & Water First, opposes turbines

Following a presentation by Shirley Boxem, county council last Thursday moved to support the Food & Water First Campaign, an initiative of North Dufferin Agriculture and Community Taskforce.

NDACT was originally formed a few years ago in opposition to approval of a mega-quarry application that would have permitted the destruction of 2,400 acres of prime farmland in Melancthon and placed the source water of four river systems in peril.

Food & Water First was formed in the hope that the Aggregate Resources Act review would lead to stronger protection of farmland and source water than the present Act and Provincial Policy Statement do.

NDACT believes the review has failed in that respect. Ms. Boxem, in presentations to the council and, earlier, at Shelburne has stated in effect that the campaign is not opposed to aggregate extraction but only what is viewed as a provincial preference to aggregates over agriculture.

Although the mega-quarry application was withdrawn in light of public opposition, "there is nothing to prevent a new application (being made)," she said.

The council's approved motion by deputy mayors Darren White of Melancthon and Walter Kolodziechuk of Amaranth reads: Whereas only 5% of Ontario's land is suitable for farming; and whereas only half of one percent of Canada's soil is Class 1; and whereas Ontario, with over 56% of Canada's Class 1 land has lost, in the two decades between 1976 and 1996, 18% of its Class 1 land; and whereas prime farmland is a non-renewable finite resource; therefore be it resolved that the County of Dufferin endorse the Food & Water First campaign.

Dufferin is the first county to have supported Food & Water First initiative in the province.

In other land use issues, the council approved a motion by Melancthon Mayor Bill Hill and Mono Deputy Mayor Ken McGhee to "declare the entire County to be an 'Unwilling Host' for any future industrial wind farm development."

Although the motion notes that the townships of Amaranth, Melancthon and Mulmur had previously declared themselves to be unwilling hosts, the county motion might be largely symbolic as the county itself does not have an official plan, and does not have any land-use control.

As well, it isn't clear where the province stands on renewable energy approvals in unwilling host municipalities. The stated policy appears to be only that preference would be given to projects within "willing host municipalities," as was the apparent case with the recent, major Samsung approval in Haldimand County.

Also with respect to farming issues, the council approved the suggested predator control bylaw.

The bylaw would permit hunting or trapping of, primarily, coyotes (or coywolves) following a livestock kill but only within a restricted area and for a limited period of time.

A Dufferin Federation of Agriculture delegation pointed out that the aim of predator control is not to exterminate coyotes but only to apply a lethal method of control where all other means have failed.

**By Wes Keller**