

March 15, 2009

FRONTENAC FARM CLOSURE

OFFENDERS' POINTS OF VIEW

I have worked on the Frontenac Farm for 2 years now where I started by driving tractors and cleaning the barns. I have worked my way up to working in the admin. office as an Inmate clerk. I do computer work where I log and print milk & egg orders for institutions in Ontario and Western Quebec, I track inventory, perform cattle counts in addition to maintaining a register of all cattle happenings every month, I do filing, I take calf pictures for registration purposes with the Holstein Association of Canada, I do computerized monthly roll-ups for institutional orders of milk and eggs and juice. This is just like working in the community because you start at the bottom and then work yourself up to a more advanced job.

Working at the Frontenac Farm is a rewarding job for being in prison because you are treated like a real employee. The staff at the Farm are very easy to work with and they treat you like an employee not like a prisoner.

Since working as a clerk at the farm I have learned many different ways of improving some of my skills such as communication, listening, teamwork and my views or ideals. These jobs help offenders get up and go to work each day and be responsible in their choices. We come to a minimum institution like Frontenac to be able to work outside and be able to prove ourselves and to better our skills and have a better chance of returning back to society.

If you take the Farm away or close it for good what then! What would you offer the inmates to improve their skills? You have said that the Farm does not provide us good working skills and it will not help offenders get employment when they're released. I would like the public to know that we did have trades, schooling and computer trade courses but they were taken away and closed down except for schooling to grade 10.

So I ask what is your plan for the offenders to have them ready for the community if they're always inside their cells or a classroom which is where we will be if you close the Farm? The Frontenac Farm or other prison farms help offenders be more reliable, responsible, have better work ethics and make them more ready to work in the community. I ask what your intention is because I would really like to get straight answers rather than the excuses we've been hearing where agriculture and the farms are being blamed for so-called poor training skills. And do not forget that these farms have been running more than 60 years and helping offenders get prepared for release. They make money at Frontenac Institution even though this is not what is being said. They help feed offenders by supplying all the Institutions with milk and eggs at a much cheaper price than if the kitchens would have to buy these products elsewhere. If closed down this would cost the taxpayers more money.

I am hoping that whoever made this bad decision to close the farm will think again.

Offender,
Chris Parmar