

Take note of simplistic worldviews

To: Waterloo Record (November 2, 2017)
Re: Take notice of conflicting funding
By: Matt McIntosh, Farm & Food Care Ontario

Life is complicated – but Marion Markham Kitchener and her activist friends like to ignore that fact.

Supporting Ontario and Canadian agriculture is one of the best ways to support our communities on a social, economic and environmental level. Conestoga Meats is a farmer cooperative that processes Ontario pork raised by Ontario farmers. Animal activists like Marion are fundamentally opposed to this, and rely on misinformation, generalizations and distortions to broadcast their message.

Environment Canada reports that, in 2015, Canadian agriculture accounted for less than 10 per cent (closer to 8 per cent) of this country's greenhouse gas emissions; emissions from livestock account for a fraction of that amount.

It's also worth noting that the information Marion sources from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization was acknowledged as flawed, and revised by that same organization several years later. That analysis also makes no mention of the need to eliminate livestock altogether (that's something activists have dreamed up), and instead reiterates how improvements in technology and our scientific understanding can – and indeed do – help farmers drastically reduce negative environmental impacts.

[Source: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3437e.pdf>]

Distilling the source of climate change, environmental degradation in the rainforest, species extinction, etc., to the fault of Canadian livestock farmers is, in every sense of the word, ludicrous.

The world is a big place, and context is everything. Canadians have a truly amazing food and agriculture system, and one which they can be very proud of – that includes from an environmental perspective.

Of course, that's not to say the rest of the world is doing a uniformly poor job either, though some people would have us believe otherwise.

For anyone interested in learning more about Canadian agriculture, I would encourage you to check out the latest edition of The Real Dirt on Farming (one of Farm & Food Care Ontario's free resources).

Get to know Canadian farmers and what they do. It's a more environmentally friendly thing to do than promoting black-and-white, fundamentalist worldviews.