



Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

# Bargaining *INFO*

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

No. 1

## PSAC / CFIA Negotiations Towards a new collective agreement:

The PSAC held a National Bargaining Conference in Ottawa September 12 to 15, 2006, to prepare the next round of negotiations with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The PSAC negotiates on behalf of nearly 4,000 members at the CFIA.

The process of renewing the collective agreement at the CFIA began on June 23, 2006, when the PSAC issued the Input Call for Bargaining Demands for the 2007 Round of Negotiations. For full details about the negotiations process at the PSAC, please read **How Bargaining Works at CFIA** on the back page.

The National Bargaining Conference began with a keynote speech delivered by Robyn Benson, the AEC officer assigned to the CFIA bargaining unit. Sister Benson emphasized that

preparation and planning are key elements to successful negotiations. **You can read Sister Benson's speech at -** <http://www.psa.com/news/releases/2006/a47-0906-e.shtml>.

The 21 participants in attendance received a presentation about the challenges we face with the new Public Service Modernization Act. Participants were also told that the PSAC is willing and ready to rise to the challenge of negotiating a fair collective agreement for members at the CFIA. If there is a lesson to be drawn from the past it is that the PSAC will have

to show its collective strength early in the bargaining process in order to achieve a fair collective agreement.

During the second day of the Conference, PSAC National President John Gordon addressed the participants. He emphasized the importance of strong membership mobilization in order to achieve a successful round of negotiations.

For Gordon, building solidarity among the members should be an ongoing goal at the local, regional and national levels.

The participants at the Conference spent most of day two and day three reviewing the bargaining proposals submitted by the members from all regions of the country.

The participants also elected the members of the CFIA Negotiation Team. They are Bob Jackson, BC.



Standing: Denis Sicard, Marlene O'Neil, Len Halldorson, Marianne Hladun, Debbie Forsythe. Sitting: Mike McNamara, PSAC negotiator, Robyn Benson, Bob Jackson, Brea Lewis. Missing: Yves Ducharme and Bob Kinston, National President and 1st Executive Vice-President Agriculture Union, ex officio members and Shawn Vincent, PSAC research officer.

Brea Lewis, AB., Marianne Hladun, SK., Len Halldorson, MB., Marlene O'Neil, ON., Denis Sicard, QC, Debbie Forsythe, Atlantic. They will be assisted by PSAC negotiator Mike McNamara and research officer Shawn Vincent. Robyn Benson, PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President, Prairies, is also a member of the Negotiation Team.

The members of the Negotiation Team will hold a series of meetings in the next few weeks to finalize the bargaining proposals and to decide when the Notice to Bargain will be presented to the employer.

# How Bargaining Works at CFIA

The PSAC negotiates on behalf of nearly 4 000 members at CFIA. There are three sets of rules that govern bargaining:

The *Public Service Labour Relations Act* is the federal law that defines the bargaining units, the procedure for negotiations, the designation of “essential services” (those who must continue working during a strike), and the way disputes are settled.

The *PSAC Constitution and Regulation 15* establish the union’s own rules for coming up with bargaining demands, electing bargaining committees, making settlements and taking strike or ratification votes.

Finally, in each round of bargaining, we try to agree on bargaining procedures with the employer for things that are not defined by law.

## HOW WE CHOOSE BARGAINING DEMANDS

The Collective Bargaining Committee of the PSAC National Board of Directors has defined four categories of demands for this round of negotiations:

**Breakthrough demands** – ones where we are breaking new ground in collective bargaining;

**Keeping pace demands** – ones where we are striving to achieve language that has been achieved in other agreements in the broader public service;

**Group specific/operational demands** – ones where we are aiming to fix particular

situations that are unique to individual groups or sub-groups within the bargaining unit.

**Wage demand** – In addition to calling for a general wage increase, this demand will be framed to call for the elimination of existing regional rates of pay.

To start the bargaining process, the PSAC Negotiation Section sends to the CFIA Locals an input call for demands for the coming round of bargaining.

The Negotiation section reviews the proposals and creates a program of demands which forms the basis for discussions at a National Bargaining Conference.

At the National Bargaining Conference, each of the seven regions of the Agriculture Union is represented by 2 delegates and one alternate.

The participants at the National Conference elect the members of the negotiations team and designate two representatives to the National Strategy Committee. They also review and prioritize the bargaining proposals.

Once the package of proposals is finalized, the PSAC serves a Notice to Bargain to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The notice freezes current terms and conditions of employment as well as the expiring collective agreement and requires the employer to meet with the Union to negotiate a renewal agreement.