

# Sussex co-operative celebrates its 170th Anniversary

The rich history of the oldest agricultural society and co-operatively-run enterprise in the world was highlighted March 29 when Sussex & Studholm Agricultural Society No. 21 (SSAS) marked its 170th anniversary.

Dignitaries present were: Michael Olscamp, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries; Bruce Northrup, MLA Kings East; Marcel Garvie, President of Co-op Atlantic; Mary MacDonald, Co-op Atlantic Board member for Zone 6; Paul-Émile Légère, incoming CEO of Co-op Atlantic and Bryan Inglis, Vice-President, Agriculture Division of Co-op Atlantic.

Other special guests included Frank Walker, who served on the board of the SSAS from 1948 to 1991, and has since been honorary member. Also present were board members and past general managers Ora Buchanan, Gerry Aldwinkle and Joe Lake.

Mike Slocum, President of SSAS, opened the ceremonies. He talked about the men who formed the agricultural society in 1841 and how earnestly they worked to improve farming and encourage agricultural developments in

their community. He also talked about the SSAS in the present day and how it is still as important today to the community as it was 170 years ago.

Dave Arsenault, SSAS General Manager, hosted the event and called on Mary MacDonald, Minister Olscamp, and Bruce Northrup to say a few words. They talked about the importance that co-operatives play in our communities and of supporting and buying from local farmers and producers. They noted the importance of this anniversary not only for the SSAS, but as an important event for Sussex and for the co-operative movement as well.

Arsenault spoke about the uniqueness of co-operatives as being the only organizations that provide crop inputs and supplies to local farmers to grow their products and then at harvest time sell them at co-op grocery stores.

He also commented on the store's recently produced book *Determined to Prosper*, written to commemorate the history of the SSAS, and about its launch on April 5.

Garrett Kierstead, representing the local 4H Club, also spoke of the importance of agriculture and supporting and buying from local producers and



Author David Bent signed copies of *Determined to Prosper: the Story of Sussex Co-op, the oldest Agricultural Society in the World*, at the official book launch in April.

farmers.

Entertainment was provided by Sarah Hayes, who sang "The Sussex Auction song", written in 1965, about people who at that time worked at the SSAS Auction barn. Her updated version contained lyrics and events pertaining to today. She was accompanied by musicians Garry and Tammy Morris.

The honour of cutting the anniversary cake was given to Frank Walker, assisted by Slocum and Arsenault.

Festivities continued throughout the evening, with time to mingle, reflect on the importance of the anniversary, have coffee, tea, donuts and of course a piece of the anniversary cake!

It was truly a celebration worthy of the organization's 170th year.

## Official Book Launch April 5

The official launch of the SSAS commemorative book *Determined to Prosper* the story of Sussex Co-op, the oldest Agricultural Society in the World was held on April 5 at The Tea Room (Jitter's Café) located in downtown Sussex. Author David Bent was there to sign copies, along with John Elliott, a local historian. To order a copy of *Determined to Prosper* email: [Sussex-mgr@co-opsonline.com](mailto:Sussex-mgr@co-opsonline.com) or telephone 506-432-1841



A number of the people who made the publication of *Determined to Prosper* possible were on hand to celebrate the book's official launch.

Standing, left to right, are: Cathy Johnston, graphic designer, Sally Colpitts, garden centre manager, Sussex Agricultural Society 21 (SSAS), John Elliott, historian, Steve Thompson, account manager for Advocate Printing, Dorothy McPhee, proofreader and Leandre Landry, operations manager, Atlantic Co-operative Publishing. Seated are: David Bent, author and Dave Arsenault, general manager, SSAS.