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**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MANITOBA FARMERS MUST HAVE A CHOICE IN FARM ORGANIZATIONS**

**TILSTON, Man.**— The NFU today sent a letter to Manitoba Minister of Agriculture Rosann Wowchuk. The letter noted that Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), at its recent Convention, passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved that Keystone Agricultural Producers lobby the provincial government to introduce legislation which will make membership mandatory for all Manitoba farmers in a provincial general farm policy organization.

The NFU letter, signed by Manitoba Board members Ken Sigurdson and Goldwyn Jones, noted that membership in KAP is falling. Commenting on the KAP's proposal to move to mandatory, non-refundable membership, the NFU letter said that "such a move is ill-conceived and damaging to KAP as well as other farm organizations. The problem that KAP's resolution seems designed to solve is that, even with a government check-off, less than half the farmers in Manitoba want to belong to KAP. The NFU strongly suggests that the solution is *not* to force all farmers into KAP. The solution is to give all farmers the option to support a farm organization that truly reflects their views and, thus, increase participation."

In its letter, the NFU said that it would support amending the *Act* and the NFU would request that those amendments make it possible for the NFU to participate in stable funding under the *Act*. "The NFU believes that the Manitoba government has two choices: eliminate the check-off altogether, or make the system more democratic by allowing other farm organizations. Clearly, farmers' low participation shows that the current system is not working," said NFU Board members Sigurdson and Jones.

"While we are opposed to check-offs, the NFU is forced to conclude that its participation in a check-off system is preferable to the status quo—where farmers' only option under the legislation is to be a member of KAP. The NFU urges you to ensure that any amendments give farmers a choice in which farm organization they support," said the letter.

The NFU in Ontario is working toward inclusion on the list of organizations eligible for stable funding in that province.

— 30 —

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