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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CWB ELECTIONS: CARE CANDIDATES AND GRAIN COMPANY MONEY

SWIFT CURRENT, Sask.—“In the upcoming CWB elections, farmers may be wise to assume that CARE candidates are grain company candidates,” said NFU President Stewart Wells.

The organization calling itself CARE (Choice, Accountability, Responsibility, Efficiency) has announced that it will not register as a third-party intervenor in the upcoming CWB Directors Elections (Western Producer, Sept. 12 2002, p. 5). CARE will collect money and pass it on to candidates, but because it refuses to register as an intervenor, it will not have to disclose the sources of its funds. CARE similarly refused to register as a third-party intervenor in the 2000 CWB elections.

In the 2000 elections, CARE took money from at least one grain company—United Grain Growers—and passed that money on to candidates (Regina Leader Post, Dec. 19, 2000, p. C5, and Western Producer, Dec 13, 2001, p. 3.).

CARE will run nine candidates in the upcoming CWB elections (CARE news release, August 7, 2002). These “CARE Candidates” will take money raised by CARE from undisclosed donors and use that money to try to weaken or destroy the CWB.

“We have an organization that has taken grain company money before, which, in this election, refuses to disclose the sources of its funding, and which is running nine candidates intent on weakening or destroying the CWB. Farmers may be forced to conclude that CARE candidates are grain company candidates,” said Wells.

Wells also questioned CARE’s assertion that it need not register as a third-party intervenor in the upcoming elections. CARE spokespeople have said that “CARE doesn’t incur any direct expenses” and, thus, need not register. On its website, however, CARE says that during the upcoming campaign it will:

...give wide-ranging support to CWB election candidates who promote [CARE’s] goals. We will supply technical advice, plus assistance and coordination for all candidates on how to organize their campaigns.

....

Our activities during the next six months will include:

- *Conducting a publicity campaign urging farmers to get permit books so they are eligible to receive a ballot, and if they already get a ballot, pushing them to vote;*
- *Providing background research and technical support on topics for our candidates to utilize in campaigning;*
- *Undertaking an education campaign on the most effective voting strategies under the preferential balloting system; and*
- *Assisting in all aspects of the local campaign of our candidates.*

“Grain company money, undisclosed fundraising and spending, lax enforcement of election regulations: the government of Canada is looking the other way while these elections are subverted,” said Wells. For over four years, the NFU has worked to convince CWB Minister Goodale, Canada’s Minister of Justice, and the Solicitor General that they must tighten up lax CWB election regulations in order to ensure fair, open and transparent elections. The NFU will again write to all three.

“Farmers who support a strong CWB should be on notice: the forces intent on destroying the CWB are well organized and well-funded. The vast majority of farmers that support a strong, effective, single-desk CWB must act. This majority of farmers must take an active interest in the elections, contribute money to campaigns of pro-CWB candidates, and ensure that all farmers who support the CWB return their ballots. If farmers fail in these responsibilities, we will lose our CWB marketing advantages—one of which is about \$250 million per year in farmers’ pockets,” concluded Wells.

— 30 —

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