

National Office
2717 Wentz Ave.
Saskatoon, Sask., S7K 4B6
Tel (306) 652-9465
Fax (306) 664-6226



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ARCHER DANIELS MIDLAND EVISCERATES CO-OPERATOR,
MANITOBA FARMERS BEGIN BUILDING ALTERNATIVE**

ROSSENDALE, Man.—The management of United Grain Growers and its parent, Archer Daniels Midland have terminated the key staff of the Manitoba Co-operator newspaper. “This move effectively ends the Co-operator as we know it and silences a key farm voice,” said NFU Vice-President Fred Tait.

UGG/ADM has terminated Editor-Publisher John Morriss; Associate Editor Laura Rance; reporters Allan Dawson and Lorraine Stevenson, and many others. UGG/ADM acquired the Co-operator when it took over Agricore (formerly the Manitoba and Alberta Pools). ADM is one of the world’s largest agri-business transnationals and has paid millions in fines for price-fixing.

“UGG/ADM’s decision to gut the Co-operator is driven by ideology. Agribusiness corporations have cut a swath of destruction through rural Canada. These corporations have destroyed farmers’ Pool co-ops, burnt our elevators, torn up railway tracks, and impoverished farm families. Now those corporations are bent on destroying the one remaining newspaper that consistently looked at agricultural issues through the eyes of family farmers, evaluated issues from the point of view of farmers’ interests, and was not afraid to speak out when farmers’ interests were threatened,” said Tait.

Tait noted that the Co-operator carries its own weight financially, making a small profit. With its award-winning reporters, many considered the Co-operator the best farm paper in Western Canada. John Morriss was one of the most respected voices in agricultural journalism. “This is not a business decision,” Tait said.

In spite of the UGG/ADM move, Tait is optimistic: “The phonecalls have already started. Farmers are discussing how they can help launch or support a successor to the Co-operator. In the end, I think that the legacy of this destructive move will be the re-emergence of a new, strong family farm newspaper for farmers across the west—a newspaper independent of the corporate agenda.”

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For More Information:

Fred Tait, Vice-President: (204) 252-2773
Darrin Qualman, Exec. Sec.: (306) 652-9465