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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WTO NEW ROUND OVERSOLD TO FARMERS

WASKATENAU, Alta.—“Many farmers spent the early nineties waiting for the long-promised WTO agreement on agriculture that would raise farm prices and return prosperity to rural Canada. That agreement came in 1995. Six years later, the result is not farm prosperity, but grinding farm crisis. Farmers will be well-served by remembering the last round of WTO negotiations when evaluating any new round,” said NFU President Cory Ollikka.

Ollikka was commenting on the agreement to launch a new round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations announced today in Doha, Qatar.

Ollikka also noted that the actual effects of any new WTO talks are a decade or more away. “It took eight years, 1986 to 1994, to negotiate the last WTO round. And that agreement required countries to phase in changes over the following ten years. This new round will take at least as long. Despite the rhetoric from Doha, today’s announcement isn’t a ‘solution’ to the current farm income crisis.”

NFU Board member Stewart Wells noted that while any possible WTO benefits are at least a decade away, the negative effects of globalization, the WTO, and other trade agreements are already here. “The last round of the WTO weakened Canada’s supply management system. The ill-conceived AIDA program is taken directly from the WTO’s Annex 2. Ottawa politicians claimed that the last WTO agreement was one of the reasons why farmers had to give up the Crow Benefit. The costs of the WTO and globalization have come home to roost: the benefits continue to recede off into the distance,” said Wells

Wells concluded: “Farmers in Canada have done everything we were told under the free trade and globalization model. We have quadrupled exports, cut the number of farmers, enlarged our farms, adopted new technology, and signed a long list of trade agreements. The result has not been farm prosperity, but a farm income crisis. This much-touted new WTO round is unlikely to change much. Let’s not get fooled again.”

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