

Replacing Prison Farm Milk to Cost Almost \$1 Million

Kingston, ON — Government tenders reveal Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) will pay almost \$1 million to replace the milk currently produced at one of Kingston's prison farms.

The tender notice, placed on the government's website, MERX, states that a milk supplier is required to deliver milk Monday to Friday to locations in Campbellford, Gravenhurst, and Kingston. The contract is valued at \$990 000.

“This ad shows the value of the milk now being produced at the Frontenac Institution in Kingston,” said Dianne Dowling, a local dairy farmer and a member of the Save Our Prison Farms campaign. “We were right to doubt the financial argument the Harper government used to justify closing the prison farm program across Canada.” There are six prison farms in Canada, located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario (two in Kingston), and New Brunswick.

Dowling pointed out that Frontenac Institution also provides milk to prisons in Quebec, a supply requirement not addressed in the advertisement. “Another tender will be needed to fill that gap when the prison farm is closed. As well, there are the eggs supplied by Frontenac that will also have to be contracted out.” In addition, senior Corrections staff have already told campaign members that CSC will not replace the thousands of dozens of eggs they currently supply to the local food bank.

The CSC notice indicates that the tender comes under NAFTA regulations, meaning the milk could come from as far away as the United States or Mexico.

“The prison farm at Frontenac spends about \$900 000 per year in the Kingston region. Closing the farm will have a negative economic impact on this part of eastern Ontario, especially farm suppliers,” Dowling said. “It shows the disdain the government has for local farmers and local business operators.”

“Meanwhile it will cost CSC almost a million dollars to replace the milk they are now producing for themselves,” Dowling said. “That money will go to milk processors and distributors that could be anywhere in North America, and will add thousands of kilometres on the delivery, contrary to the local food movement. The milk produced at the prison farm is now processed at the prison dairy within hours of collection and inmates earn third party dairy handling certificates.”

“Right now, the prison farms are supplying several prisons with local and sustainable products at low cost to Canadian taxpayers,” said Bridget Doherty of the Sisters of Providence peace and justice office. “This ad shows that the government is willing to stop inmates from contributing to the prison system, in dismantling a rehabilitation program that is a model for the world.”

Both the Save Our Prison Farms campaign and the House of Commons Public Safety Committee have asked the Harper government to make public the CSC Strategic Review, which proposed

closing the prison farms. So far, Public Safety Minister Vic Toews has not supplied the information.

“It’s time the government stopped hiding the facts and came clean on its actions,” said Doherty. “Why should the public have to accept destructive policies without having access to information?”

The Save Our Prison Farms campaign will be hold information meetings in ridings held by Conservative members of Parliament. Meetings are scheduled for May 4 at the Athens Township Hall, and on May 10 at the Napanee Town Hall. Both meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.

“With Liberal, NDP, and Green Party speakers, these events in Tory-held ridings are a multi-party effort to stop the Harper Conservatives from closing the prison farms,” said Dowling. “The government needs to wake up to the message that the closures do not make financial or public safety sense to Canadians.”

For more information, please contact:

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TEXT OF MERX NOTICE:

Milk - Correctional Service of Canda

Trade Agreement: NAFTA/AIT
Tendering Procedures:
Attachment: None
Competitive Procurement Strategy: Lowest/Lower Bid
Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement: No
Nature of Requirements:

Milk - Correctional Service of Canada

21401-106026/A
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To establish a Regional Individual Standing Offer (RISO) for the provision of Milk to Correctional Service Canada, Kingston , Campbellford and Gravenhurst , Ontario .

Period of Standing Offer: Date of award to 31 May 2011.

Supplier must be able to make deliveries Monday to Friday before 12 Noon on Delivery days.

Estimated Value: \$990,000.00 (GST Excluded)
Delivery Date: 23/04/2010