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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19th, 2011

NFU CALLS ON HARPER GOVERNMENT TO BE HONEST ABOUT CWB

Saskatoon, Sask. – The National Farmers Union is calling on the Harper Conservative government to be honest about the Canadian Wheat Board. On Wednesday returning Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz stated that the Conservative Government intends to remove the CWB’s single desk through changes to legislation in the fall. He also stated that the CWB would continue to be an option for farmers after the changes, and that farmers would be better off without the single desk. “Ritz is not being honest with farmers. The fact is farmers won’t be better off without the single desk, because the CWB won’t survive without it. This idea of a dual market is a myth. It’s the CWB with its single desk, or no CWB at all,” stated NFU President Terry Boehm.

One only needs to look at what happened in Australia over the past three years. In 2008 the government of Australia removed the single desk of the Australian Wheat Board’s (AWB), and today it no longer exists. It was broken up, with parts of sold off to Agrium and Cargill. This happened despite the fact that the AWB possessed considerable assets, in contrast to the CWB which has not been allowed to possess any assets such as grain handling facilities.

“The Harper government continues to argue that farmers will be better off without the CWB. However, they have never produced any financial analysis to demonstrate this. The only academic studies on this have always proven that the CWB brings substantial benefits to farmers through the power of its single desk selling advantage. The fact is, the CWB brings \$1.5 billion into farmers pockets every year, money they would not have otherwise,” said Boehm.

“The advantage of the single desk to farmers is no surprise either. Patents work the same way for big corporations. Patents give corporations exclusive selling rights on their products. Why do you think corporations defend their patents so vigorously? It’s the same with OPEC in the oil sector and it’s the same with Canpotex in the Potash sector, a point the Brad Wall government was quick to make in Saskatchewan last fall, “stated NFU President Terry Boehm.

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