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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EUROPEAN, NORTH AMERICAN FARMERS CALL WTO A FAILURE

Farm leaders from Canada, the United States and the European Union expressed strong criticism of their negotiators' trade proposals at a press conference in Hong Kong this morning. They declared trade liberalization and the World Trade Organization (WTO) a proven failure for farmers and rural communities all over the world.

Leaders from farm organizations: National Farmers Union (NFU) of Canada, National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) of the United States and European Farmers Coordination (CPE), members of La Via Campesina international coalition, said that globalization has created a farm income crisis. Their own countries' policies are destroying family farmers both in developed and developing countries.

"Farmers around the globe need to be remunerated for the robbery of 'increased market access' which has failed us," said Rene Louail, CPE Board member. "Transnational corporations are reaping record profits through a flawed subsidy system which has stolen the ability of farmers to earn a living. We are producing more and getting less and less."

George Naylor, a farmer from Churdan, Iowa who serves as President of the NFFC, warned that other countries should not believe the US promises to significantly cut subsidies. "The US Trade Representative does not make agricultural policy in the US," he said. "Congress does. Congressional leaders in George Bush's own party have publicly said they would oppose large subsidy cuts. The farm and rural economy in the US could collapse if there are not price floors and supply management tools to replace subsidies."

Colleen Ross, Women's President of the NFU, said better and increased supply management tools guarantee a fair return to farmers. "Supply management is under real threat now at the WTO," she said.

As long as farmers are forced to produce and sell food for less than the cost of production, the farm income crisis will continue, warned José Bové, representing La Via Campesina, the global farmers movement. "Farmers around the world will continue to protest and take serious action against the WTO," he said. "The world needs food sovereignty, not free trade."

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Please note that there is a 12 to 16 hour time difference between Canada and Hong Kong
For example, 9:00 AM CST Thursday in Canada is 11:00 PM Thursday in Hong Kong

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