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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

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LIBERAL COMMITMENT TO EASTER REPORT ENCOURAGING, SAYS NFU

The federal Liberal Party's promise to "implement the main recommendations of the Easter Report" is encouraging, says Stewart Wells, President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

The NFU is a strictly non-partisan organization with thousands of members across Canada. The NFU advocates policies promoting the interests of family farms.

The Easter Report, entitled "Empowering Canadian Farmers in the Marketplace", calls for increasing farmers' economic power in the marketplace through more farmer-owned co-operatives, supply-management systems and orderly marketing agencies. The report also advocates strengthening the Competition Act to rein in corporate concentration.

Wells said the Liberals' agriculture policy platform, unveiled December 20, marks the first time the Paul Martin government has publicly committed itself to revamping the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), which guides the policies of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). Current agriculture policies promoting increased exports at low prices has fuelled the present farm income crisis, which has seen the average realized net farm income plunge to negative \$20,000 per farm.

"The NFU has consistently advocated that this report form the foundation for an agricultural policy that puts realized farm incomes as a priority," he said. "To implement these changes, however, would require a complete turn-around of existing AAFC bias towards corporate agribusiness. It will be a challenge for the Liberals to follow through on this promise."

The NFU President said at the recent NFU convention in Ottawa, the NFU pledged to work with anybody, anytime, to implement the "Empowering Canadian Farmers in the marketplace" report.

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