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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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QUEBEC FARMER TO SPEAK AT ALBERTA NFU REGIONAL CONVENTION

One of the biggest problems facing livestock farmers in Alberta is the steady increase in surplus cull cows. Not only is the herd at near-record levels, prices for cull animals at the farm gate are pitifully low.

But in Quebec, the cull cow herd has returned to normal levels, and farmers are getting 42 cents a pound for their animals – well above market values in western Canada. Why the difference? The main reason is the actions taken by farmers to regain control over the marketplace.

Ivan Hale, Executive-Director of the Quebec Farmers Association (QFA – a member organization of the umbrella group Union des Producteurs Agricoles – UPA), is slated to be the keynote speaker at the National Farmers Union (NFU) regional meeting in Calmar, Alberta, June 18. Hale will explain how the UPA, through negotiations brokered by the Quebec government, engineered a deal to buy an 80% share in the largest cull cow slaughterhouse in the province. In the process, they also instituted a floor price of 42 cents a pound for cull cows.

Negotiations for the UPA purchase of the Colbex-Levinoff plant are completed and the agreement is signed. The transfer of ownership is slated to take place June 1, 2006.

Jan Slomp, NFU Alberta Coordinator, says the Quebec farmers' experience illustrates there are alternatives to the current market quagmire. By inviting the Quebec farm leader to speak, he hopes to spark discussion and promote fresh ideas.

The NFU regional convention will also hear from John Knapp, Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Alberta; Sandi Checkel of the Alberta Research Council, on the effects of herbicide residues on future crop production; and Landowners' Rights advocate Karl Zeges on the emerging conflicts with oil and gas exploration companies. NFU President Stewart Wells is also slated to speak to the convention.

The NFU Alberta regional convention will take place at the Calmar Curling Rink on Saturday, June 18, beginning at 9:15 AM. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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