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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 25, 2005

FARM INCOME FIGURES SHOW MARKET STILL FAILING FARMERS

Canadian farmers suffered net losses from the marketplace of nearly \$3 billion in 2004, despite high levels of sales and exports. At the same time, corporate profits in the agriculture and food sectors continue to rise. This clearly indicates farmers need greater power in the marketplace, according to Stewart Wells, President of the National Farmers Union.

According to the most recent Net Farm Income figures released by Statistics Canada November 25, government program payments amounted to a record \$4.9 billion in 2004. But even when this unprecedented injection of funds is added to the total, realized net farm income amounted to only \$2.1 billion.

“It clearly shows that the marketplace is not working in the interests of farmers,” stated Wells. “Farmers are producing more, and selling more, but the revenue is simply passing through their hands into the pockets of large corporations.”

Wells noted the average net farm income from the markets in Canada remains at between negative \$10,000 and negative \$20,000 per farm.

He said the recent net farm income figures underline the urgency behind the call to implement recommendations contained in the government-commissioned report entitled “Empowering Canadian Farmers in the Marketplace”. That report revealed that high levels of corporate concentration have been a key factor in depressing prices of grains and livestock at the farm gate. High input costs, combined with these low prices, have created a situation where farm incomes have been stuck near record lows for several years.

The NFU has presented federal and provincial governments with a 16-point plan for overcoming the farm income crisis. It can be accessed at www.nfu.ca

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