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**national farmers union**

*In Union Is Strength*

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## **NFU raises objections to CWB electoral review panel process**

A three-person review panel appointed last summer by the federal government to provide recommendations on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) elections is expected to release its report in the near future.

Without pre-judging any recommendations that may come from this government-appointed review panel, the National Farmers Union (NFU) is raising criticism of the review process itself.

NFU President Stewart Wells said farmers need to be “ready to push back” in case the panel recommends changes that may damage the CWB’s ability to maximize returns to farmers, or which may undermine the democratic structure of the Board through unequal voting arrangements.

Wells indicated the panel’s work has been jeopardized from the beginning by the appointment of Greg Porozni as one of its three panel members. “Mr. Porozni was an unsuccessful candidate in the 2002 CWB Director elections. During that campaign, Porozni worked with an organization which was previously found to have funneled money from grain companies to anti-CWB candidates while not registering as an intervenor. In addition, during the campaign it was revealed by CBC Radio that Mr. Porozni was working on a secret committee convened by GMO-wheat seed developer Monsanto. Mr. Porozni had not revealed this information to potential voters or to the election coordinator, accounting firm Meyers Norris Penny.”

Also, during the review process itself, it appeared that many groups which have expressed anti-CWB sentiments in the past have been given preferential treatment. At the same time, other legitimate farm organizations may have had less opportunity to make presentations to the panel.

“Farmers should be asking: was the National Citizens Coalition (NCC – founded by insurance millionaire Colin M Brown in the 1960s to undermine Medicare), invited to make a presentation to the panel?” stated Wells. “And were legitimate farm organizations, such as West Central Road and Rail (WCRR) and the Farmer Rail Car Coalition (FRCC) not sent similar invitations?”

The NFU President pointed out that only three days of hearings were held during the busy harvest season, which further excluded most farmers. The deadline for submissions was September 30, well before harvest had ended.

“When taken in isolation, many of the points seem to be small concerns,” said Wells. “But when added together, these irregularities paint a picture of the Porozni panel actively embracing input from anti-CWB activists while minimizing input from legitimate farmers or farm organizations.”

- 30 -

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