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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU OPPOSES CUTS TO INWARD INSPECTIONS OF GRAIN

The National Farmers Union (NFU) opposes any cuts to Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) inward inspections of grain as it comes into the Canadian grain handling system.

“The NFU has recently learned the CGC itself has triggered another review of inward inspections,” stated NFU President Stewart Wells. “We have written a letter to the Chief Commissioner of the CGC on the issue, In this letter we ask some important questions about this new review.” (The letter is available on request.)

In 1997, the CGC management proposed fundamental changes and cuts to CGC services which threatened Canada’s reputation as the supplier of the highest quality grain in the world.

“In 1997, Canadian farmers and their organizations had to fight hard to hold the CGC true to its mandate to be regulator of the grain handling system,” explained Wells. “This requirement for a regulator was well understood in 1912 when the CGC was first created. With the lack of competition out there now it is even more important in 2005 that we have a competent and effective regulator looking after farmers’ interests downstream from the farm.”

The CGC currently inspects the contents of each rail car which arrives at a terminal elevator. Incorrect, off-condition, and contaminated grain can be spotted at that time, before that carload of grain is mixed with others. “Discontinuing or privatizing inward inspection is a dangerous, unwise, and unwarranted move. Farmers pay just 1 cent per bushel for that service. It is valuable to them, and there have been no calls from farmers for its termination.”

Wells pointed out that removing CGC personnel from terminal elevators may mean that existing grain companies would be responsible for sampling and grading producer car shipments from individual farmers. “This would be a dream come true for existing elevator companies,” he said.

The CGC is the farmers’ watchdog at port and throughout the grain handling system. The Canada Grain Act states that the CGC shall “in the interests of grain

producers, establish and maintain standards of quality for Canadian grain and regulate grain handling in Canada, to ensure a dependable commodity for domestic and export markets.”

“Despite losing the battle in 1999 to cut vital regulatory functions, the CGC seems to be at it again,” concluded Wells. “The NFU calls on all farmers and organizations to get involved in this discussion and protect the farmers’ interests in the system.”

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