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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU CALLS ON CFIA TO STOP APPROVALS OF GLYPHOSATE-RESISTANT PLANT VARIETIES IN LIGHT OF NEW SCIENTIFIC STUDY

An article by several Saskatchewan crop scientists in the latest issue of a scholarly journal proves there is a clear correlation between the application of glyphosate herbicides and increased incidence of fusarium head blight in wheat.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) says this research suggests glyphosate-resistant crops are therefore contributing to the spread of a disease which is costing western Canadian farmers hundreds of millions of dollars in lost yields and markets.

NFU President Stewart Wells issued a letter to Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) President François Guimont earlier this week calling on the CFIA to “immediately stop approvals of additional glyphosate-resistant cultivars, including glyphosate-resistant alfalfa, and re-evaluate the approval of glyphosate-resistant varieties currently on the market until all the fusarium links are clearly understood.”

The article, entitled “Crop Production Factors Associated with Fusarium Head Blight in Spring Wheat in Eastern Saskatchewan” was published in *Crop Science*, the journal of the Crop Science Society of America, on August 26, 2005. The research was conducted between 1999 and 2002 and involved samples from 659 crops. Information on agronomic practices used in these fields was also factored into the calculations.

Wells said the NFU was first alerted to the potential link between glyphosate-resistant crops and the increased incidence of fusarium in 2003 by the scientists at the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Swift Current. Since June, 2003, the NFU has repeatedly asked the CFIA to investigate this correlation, but the CFIA has evaded the issue.

“Over the past two years, and as the evidence of a glyphosate herbicide/fusarium link has mounted, the CFIA has adopted a moving target for the burden of proof,” stated Wells. “Initially, the CFIA said there was *no research* on this issue. Then, the CFIA stated it was not aware of any *published research*. Finally, the CFIA said it was not aware of any *peer-reviewed research*.”

The publication of the research in the most prestigious Crop Science journal in North America meets all these criteria, he stated. "This is another example of the tremendous contribution of Canada's public researchers," concluded Wells. "It is very likely that more research on this subject could save Canadian farmers hundreds of millions of dollars, and on a global scale the benefit would climb into the billions of dollars."

Copies of the letter to CFIA are available upon request.

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