

National Office  
2717 Wentz Ave.  
Saskatoon, Sask.  
S7K 4B6  
Tel (306) 652-9465  
Fax (306) 664-6226  
E-Mail: [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca)



**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

April 10, 2006

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER

Prime Minister Stephen Harper  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

[pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

Late last week, the National Farmers Union became aware that an agricultural industry lobby group called the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) was asking its members to contact you regarding World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. CAFTA members include the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, Cargill, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and others..

In its communiqué to its members, dated April 5, 2006, CAFTA is concerned that there was "a great deal of space given in yesterday's Throne Speech to Quebec's interests (including international interests.)" The communiqué goes on to say that "The PMO appears to be leaning towards also making strong accommodation for Quebec's interest at the WTO." These comments are made in such a way as to put the legitimate interests of Quebec's farmers in a negative light.

The NFU is concerned about the position that CAFTA is taking for the following reasons:

1. CAFTA has singled out Quebec and Quebec farmers as the problem and not the solution for Canadian interests domestically and at the WTO. By specifically mentioning Quebec, CAFTA seems to be making this an issue of national unity, as if it is Quebec versus the rest of the country. The NFU assures you that the advantages of orderly marketing accrue to farmers all across Canada, and that CAFTA is wrong-headed in framing the debate in this manner.
2. At least one person that has been a CAFTA representative, and attended the Hong Kong WTO meetings as a CAFTA representative, is now working in the office of David Anderson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.\*

3. As a result of the previous point, the NFU is worried that the narrow and extreme views of CAFTA, vis-à-vis the interests of Quebec's and other Canadian farmers, have the constant attention of Mr. Anderson and even more importantly, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

4. The policies promoted by CAFTA are intended to undermine and destroy the marketing advantages of orderly marketing agencies. Any erosion of orderly marketing in Canada would reduce the amount of money that farmers currently attain from the marketplace and make farmers even more reliant on government (taxpayer-funded) programs.

In conclusion, the National Farmers Union urges you to reject the narrow and extreme views of CAFTA.

Yours truly,

Stewart Wells  
President  
National Farmers Union

Contact: Stewart Wells, NFU President (306) 773-6852 or (306) 741-7694

*\*Randy Hoback is currently working in David Anderson's office. Hoback is a former Chair of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and a CAFTA representative at the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in December, 2005.*

Cc:

Hon. Jacques Gourde MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food [gourde.j@parl.gc.ca](mailto:gourde.j@parl.gc.ca)  
Mr. Alex Atamanenko MP, NDP Agriculture Critic [Atamanenko.A@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Atamanenko.A@parl.gc.ca)  
Mr. André Bellavance MP, Bloc Québécois Agriculture Critic [bellaa@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bellaa@parl.gc.ca)  
Hon. Wayne Easter MP, Liberal Agriculture Critic [Easter.W@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Easter.W@parl.gc.ca)  
Mr. Ian Brodie, Chief of Staff, PMO [ibrodie@pmo-cpm.gc.ca](mailto:ibrodie@pmo-cpm.gc.ca)  
Mr. Mark Cameron, Policy Manager, PMO [mcameron@pmo-cmp.gc.ca](mailto:mcameron@pmo-cmp.gc.ca)  
Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food [Strahlc@agr.gc.ca](mailto:Strahlc@agr.gc.ca)  
Hon. David Emerson, Minister of International Trade  
[david.emerson@international.gc.ca](mailto:david.emerson@international.gc.ca)