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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **APRIL 17 MARKS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FARMERS' STRUGGLE**

The recent farm protests in Canada are part of a larger international movement of farmers seeking social and economic justice, says Colleen Ross, Women's President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

April 17 marks the "International Day of Farmers' Struggle" – coordinated worldwide by La Via Campesina, a coalition of farm organizations from many countries. The NFU is a member of La Via Campesina. The Family Farm Coalition in the United States is also a member of the Coalition.

Earlier this month, an estimated 10,000 farmers from across Canada converged on Parliament Hill to protest low farm incomes and rising costs. Realized net farm income for the average Canadian farm is between negative \$10,000 and negative \$20,000. Meanwhile, agribusiness corporations which supply inputs such as chemicals and seed are making record profits. Likewise, food processors, exporters and retailers are also enjoying high profits at farmers' expense.

Ross said despite rising exports of agricultural and food commodities, Canadian farmers' incomes have declined. "Farmers are producing more, but the increased production cannot compensate for falling commodity prices," she stated.

Ross said the ongoing World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations aimed at trade liberalization have done more harm than good for farmers. "The WTO talks are undermining Canada's supply-management systems, the Canadian Wheat Board, and other policies which benefit family farmers," she noted. "The WTO talks are only aimed at increasing trade; they are not concerned about raising farm incomes or building food security."

The NFU Women's President said the farmers' message at the Ottawa protest earlier this month needs to be repeated: "There is money being made in agriculture, but the market isn't paying farmers for what they do." A study on levels of corporate profits is available from the NFU website at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).

The NFU is active internationally on a number of fronts. NFU representatives were at the WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December, 2005 to ensure Canadian family farmers' interests were protected and to work with Via Campesina members. The NFU

also played a key role in March, 2006 at the UN Conference on Biodiversity meeting in Brazil to ensure the global moratorium on Terminator Technology ([www.banterminator.org](http://www.banterminator.org)) was not lifted.

Ross concluded that farm and food issues affect all people. “The structure of the global food system is an issue that should concern everyone,” she said.

The International Day of Farmers’ Struggle was instituted by the Via Campesina to commemorate the murder of 19 farmworkers in Brazil on April 17, 1996. The murders were politically-motivated because of the farmworkers’ involvement in the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST – Movement of Landless Rural Workers).

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