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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW GOVERNMENT MUST AIM TO RAISE FARM INCOMES, SAYS NFU

The new Conservative minority government must implement policies that help family farmers, says the President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

With realized net farm income at historically low levels, Stewart Wells said the Conservatives must follow through on the former government's previously-announced \$755 million emergency assistance to grains and oilseed farmers. He added that "meaningful caps" are needed to ensure the assistance is targeted to family farms.

He said farmers' main concern is achieving higher incomes from the marketplace. "There is a need for strong market institutions that maximize returns to farmers," Wells noted. "We don't want to see any weakening of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) or supply-management." A so-called "voluntary" wheat board will result in many millions of dollars in losses to western Canadian farmers.

The NFU President said the Conservatives' campaign promise to replace the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program with two separate plans for income stabilization and disaster relief should also be followed through in the coming months. "We'll be taking a close look at those replacement programs when they're announced," he said.

NFU Vice-President Terry Boehm said the NFU strongly advocates the new Conservative government move quickly to ban field testing and commercialization of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs), popularly known as Terminator technology. This technology involves the use of genetic modification to produce seeds which are sterile and cannot reproduce, thereby preventing farmers from reusing seed from their own harvest.

"The NFU pushed back the move to extend Plant Breeders Rights legislation that would have severely harmed farmers' ability to save and reuse seeds," said Boehm. "The Conservative government would be ill-advised to go down that path."

The Conservative promise to implement a Green Cover Crop Program with a compensation fund for farmers facing severe flood damage could potentially benefit farmers, concluded Wells.

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