

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



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OCTOBER 17, 2006**

### **MINISTER MOVES TO RIG CWB ELECTIONS**

**SWIFT CURRENT, Sask.**—In the middle of a CWB election period, after farmers received letters from the election coordinator saying they will automatically receive ballots, Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl has moved to strip 16,000+ of those farmers off the voters' list.

“Canada’s Minister of Agriculture has unilaterally intervened in a democratic election to deprive farmers of their right to vote and to alter the results of the election. This government talks about giving farmers ‘choice,’ but this government is clearly afraid of what farmers may actually choose,” said NFU President Stewart Wells.

Strahl has removed 16,000+ voters from the list of approximately 45,000 farmers set to vote in the upcoming CWB Director elections (in the five odd-numbered electoral Districts). Strahl is removing farmers who have not delivered grain to the CWB in the past 15 months.

Strahl says that those 16,000+ voters can apply to receive ballots by filling out statutory declarations. However, the now-excluded farmers received letters in September from Election Coordinator Meyers Norris Penny telling the farmers they would “automatically” receive a ballot and that they “don’t have to do anything” in order to qualify.

“While the disenfranchised farmers may get ballots if they fill in declarations, we have no confidence the declaration process will be swift and efficient enough to ensure that 16,000+ farmers can obtain declarations, fill them out and mail them in, be processed through the system, receive ballots, return those ballots, and have their votes counted in time for the election. Many of those farmers just lost their right to vote in the upcoming elections,” said Wells.

Some farmers stripped from the voters list may have had no recent CWB deliveries because they lost their crops entirely to bad weather or had those crops damaged and, thus, produced only feed-quality wheat or barley. “Farmers who fell victim to flood or frost have just been re-victimized by ministerial decree,” said Wells.

Minister Strahl’s election tampering is the latest in a series of moves that show disdain for the CWB and for transparent and democratic processes. Moves include:

- the now-infamous July 27 closed-door meeting in Saskatoon,

- creating a Task Force stacked with industry-linked CWB-opponents,
- inappropriately appointing anti-CWB farmer Ken Motiuk as a CWB Director,
- raising concerns with the *Western Producer* about columnist Wendy Holm,
- the government's ongoing refusal to comply with Section 47 (1) of the *CWB Act* and hold a farmer vote before making major changes to CWB jurisdiction,
- alleged connections to an inappropriate letter-writing scheme, and
- last week's gag order on the CWB.

Wells concluded: "The Minister is displaying a pattern of anti-democratic behavior and hostility to the CWB and farmers. How else could you characterize today's move? And we don't believe today's action will be the last. It's apparent the Harper Conservatives will say and do anything, including election tampering, in order to destroy the CWB. Farmers must respond."

– 30 –

For More Information:

Stewart Wells, NFU President: (306) 773-6852

Darrin Qualman, Director of Research: (306) 652-9465