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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

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GOVERNMENT CONTROL IS THEME OF STRAHL'S TASK FORCE REPORT

The report of the task force to kill the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is long on platitudes and short on specifics, but the federal government's underlying agenda is very clear, says the President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

"Buried in the platitudes is the underlying theme of absolute government control of the Canadian Wheat Board," said Stewart Wells.

The report, released by the Agriculture Minister October 30, adds nothing new to the debate, but does provide support for the government's pattern of exercising absolute control over the CWB Board of Directors. "At one point, it advocates that the Minister terminate the elected Board and install a hand-picked 'interim' Board of Directors who will follow the government's direction," stated Wells.

In addition, the report calls for increased direct 'oversight' of the CWB Board of Directors. Wells said 'oversight' is a "euphemism for absolute control."

Wells said it is significant that the task force report was first unveiled, not to western Canadian farmers or even to the Canadian public, but to a large US business publication, "Inside US Trade". "That should provide some indication of whose interests are being served with this report," he noted.

The report fails to recommend that the first step for any change has to be the farmer plebiscite as required under the CWB Act, so in this regard the report is advocating that the government actually break the law, Wells added.

The report fails to provide a single piece of evidence which points to increased returns for farmers from a voluntary marketing entity.

"Even though some of these people and organizations have been working for thirty years to kill the CWB, the task force report shows they have no way of proving that it would be good for farmers," stated Wells. "As a result, and just like the July 27 meeting of the same people, they don't even try because they 'don't want to get bogged down in the details'. This task force, again just like the July 27 meeting, has been a colossal waste of taxpayers' money."

“Farmers must react to this report by electing single-desk supporters in the ongoing CWB Director elections,” concluded Wells.

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