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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ELIMINATION OF KERNEL VISUAL DISTINGUISHABILITY POSES RISK**

The elimination of Kernel Visual Distinguishability (KVD) as the primary method for grain variety identification will severely undermine Canada's reputation for high quality standards for grain, says Terry Boehm, Vice-President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

Earlier this week, the Harper government released a document indicating it would abolish KVD requirements by 2010, despite the current absence of technology necessary to prevent the intentional or unintentional mixing of grain classes in the bulk handling and transportation system. This change would occur through regulatory, rather than legislative, amendments. The government has mandated the Canadian Grain Commission to prepare a report outlining a "work plan" for implementing an alternative to KVD in 2010. But incredibly, that report is not due until December 31, 2009.

The government claims that "science-based mechanisms for quality control", coupled with farmers' declarations or affidavits, will be sufficient for safeguarding grain quality.

But the NFU Vice-President says that assertion is based on wishful thinking, not hard facts. "The pressure to remove KVD is coming from those interests who stand to benefit from the introduction of lower-quality, higher-yielding varieties," stated Boehm. "Eliminating KVD will also benefit those who hold intellectual property rights for certain varieties and who control, through the use of contracts, the distribution and sale of those varieties. It will also undermine farmers' ability to save and reuse seed in the long term."

Boehm said there is, at present, no reliable method other than KVD for quick and accurate identification of grain classes. Boehm added that it is not in the public interest to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to replace a system that has proven its reliability and consistency for more than a century. "KVD has allowed us to be competitive and reliable suppliers of quality wheat, in sharp contrast to the Americans."

"This move has a strong potential to seriously impair Canada's ability to maintain quality standards through the system. The KVD system is essential to maintaining the existing grain quality standards for which Canada is justifiably renowned," said Boehm.

Boehm added the NFU strongly opposes the Government's stated intention to change the *Canada Grain Act* with respect to protection for farmers. "At the present time, the primary mandate of the Canadian Grain Commission is to operate in the interests of grain producers," stated Boehm. "Under the proposed amendments, that mandate is lost."

The NFU also expressed opposition to the Harper Government's intention to eliminate the offices of CGC Assistant Commissioners, eliminate mandatory inward inspection services, and contract out grain inspection services to private companies.

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