

National Office
2717 Wentz Ave.
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7K 4B6
Tel (306) 652-9465
Fax (306) 664-6226
E-Mail: nfu@nfu.ca



national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 17, 2007

MISLEADING ANTI-CWB ADS A WASTE OF TAXPAYERS' FUNDS

The Harper Conservatives' high-profile advertising campaign to sell amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Regulations is a massive waste of taxpayers' money, says Stewart Wells, President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

Canadians have been bombarded with print and broadcast advertisements containing the government's misleading spin on the barley plebiscite. The estimated cost of this ad campaign alone is reportedly three-quarters of a million dollars. Conservative MPs also spent massive amounts of public funds during the barley plebiscite, urging farmers to vote for so-called "marketing choice."

The CWB, meanwhile, has been silenced by a gag order imposed by the federal government on October 11, 2006.

The NFU recently filed an Access to Information (ATI) request to find out the total cost of the government's advertising spree. The NFU has also asked the federal Auditor-General to examine irregularities in government spending during the barley plebiscite.

"Why is the Harper government wasting taxpayers' money on this campaign?" queried Wells. "If the government has the support it claims to enjoy, then why waste money on spinning its message? And if it doesn't have widespread support, it's an even bigger waste of public money."

Wells pointed out the ads themselves are misleading because the ad copy refers to the Canadian Wheat Board as a "buyer" of farmers' barley, when in fact it is a "marketer" that operates on behalf of farmers. The ads also mislead by selling an impossible option: a CWB without a single desk trying to run voluntary pooling.

"The government is spending untold amounts of public money in an effort to take away hundreds of millions of dollars from farmers," concluded the NFU President.

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Contact: Stewart Wells, NFU President (306) 773-6852 or (306) 741-7694
Terry Pugh, NFU Executive-Secretary (306) 652-9465
Darrin Qualman, NFU Director of Research (306) 652-9465