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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COMMONS AG COMMITTEE MUST HOLD INQUIRY INTO LIVESTOCK CRISIS**

National Farmers Union (NFU) Women's President Colleen Ross and NFU Youth Vice-President Kalissa Regier testified before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee in Ottawa November 28.

The NFU urged the House of Commons Agriculture Committee to immediately launch a public inquiry into the financial crisis facing Canada's livestock farmers. The inquiry needs to be conducted in rural communities in each province. Colleen Ross also called on the Commons Agriculture Committee to force the big packing companies and retailers to "open their books to reveal their profit taking on pork and beef." Resolutions calling for these measures were adopted at the NFU National Convention in London, Ontario.

Ross said the sharp income drop suffered by family farmers is taking a terrible toll on rural communities. She said an immediate short-term investment consisting of graduated payments up to a cap of \$100,000 needs to be made to farmers so they can survive into next year.

Ross and Regier were called as witnesses before the Commons Agriculture Committee hearing on national agricultural policy. Ross said the central issue in the farm policy debate is realized net farm income. "Farmers are the foundation of the food system. We are the producers of wealth, and the simple fact is that we need to earn a fair return on our labour and investment. Any agricultural policy that ignores family farmers in order to boost profitability of processors and exporters is inherently inequitable and unsustainable."

Regier addressed the problems confronting young farmers, and said orderly marketing structures, including the Canadian Wheat Board and supply-management systems, are of critical importance.

The NFU representatives told the Commons Agriculture Committee that misleading regulations for food labelling need to be changed so that consumers are able to choose products that are grown in Canada.

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