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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NFU SEEKS DATA ON COST-SHARING FOR RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FROM FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS**

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is asking the federal government and the Ontario provincial government to put all the details of the proposed Risk Management Program (RMP) on the table and explain the discrepancies in the stories around the funding of the program.

NFU Ontario Coordinator Grant Robertson says the request was prompted by a “divergence in the stories” coming from the two levels of government. The NFU is seeking the information in order to communicate the merits and shortcomings of the program with its members and other farmers.

NFU President Stewart Wells noted that even after contacting the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) and attending public meetings, NFU officials and farmers in general are left with more questions than answers. “This information should be readily available, since the Ontario government has indicated it is waiting for the Federal Government to commit 60% of the cost of the program,” stated Wells. “It stands to reason OMAF would have submitted the program details to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.” The NFU is supportive of the federal government contributing 60% of the cost of the program.

But when Robertson contacted federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz’s office in an attempt to gain material to review, he was told that no formal RMP proposal was submitted by the Ontario government. When asked to provide any formal requests for funding from the province, officials in Ritz’s office said they could find no record of any such request.

“Federal participation in this program is a serious issue for grain and oilseed farmers in Ontario. The Government of Ontario has said they are awaiting federal participation, yet there seems to be some evidence they have not actually officially asked, despite a commitment to farmers,” said Wells. “Today we have faxed letters to both the federal and provincial governments in an effort to clarify the program’s funding and other details.”

The letters sent by the NFU ask for any documentation sent between the two levels of government regarding an official request by Ontario for 60% federal participation in the

program. The letter to the Ontario government also asks for other details regarding the program.

Robertson noted that when the RMP was first announced by the Ontario government, former federal agriculture minister Chuck Strahl indicated he would not support a “stand-alone” provincial program, given the agreement in principle, reached with the nation’s agriculture ministers, in which Ontario was a participant. This should have prompted an immediate official request by the province for federal participation in order to facilitate negotiations, according to Robertson.

“The NFU was the first general farm organization in Ontario to support the concept of the RMP, although we have always advocated that it be capped and targeted,” said Wells. “We want the best possible deal for farmers, and that includes federal participation. As well, the NFU believes all the details should be made public. With harvest for many crops well underway, farmers need to know what’s in it before they decide to participate.”

Robertson concluded the NFU is simply asking that government to show how the costs and benefits of the RMP were determined, and let farmers judge the program on all the information.

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