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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 29, 2008

HARPER, RITZ ATTACK DEMOCRACY AND FARMERS' INCOMES

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz are continuing their unrelenting attacks on democracy and farmers' incomes.

National Farmers Union President Stewart Wells says it appears likely Ritz will resume his assault on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) at a scheduled appearance in Regina today by talking about proposed legislative changes. But depending on its content, Ritz's proposed legislation could be open to court challenges if it violates Section 47.1 of the current *Canadian Wheat Board Act*.

Section 47.1 stipulates that western Canadian farmers must democratically decide the fate of their own marketing agency. In 2007, the Harper Government attempted to circumvent democracy by introducing a secret Cabinet Order which was found to be illegal by two separate judges. The secret Cabinet Order spelled out regulatory changes which violated Section 47.1 of the *CWB Act*. Two Federal Court rulings confirmed the Harper Government was caught breaking the law.

In addition to the Harper Government's attack on democracy, it is also aggressively working to drive down farmers' incomes. Ritz is very recently on record as saying that barley prices are too high, and that removing barley from the CWB would lower barley prices at the farm gate. Ritz stated during a news conference February 13 in Ottawa: **"But we've got a struggling livestock sector out there that needs a lot more barley in the ground, not less, to try and bring the price down."**

In an exchange in the House of Commons February 27, Ritz said he intends to take measures to ensure that the Wheat Board will "blow away like a bad dream."

Wells and other supporters of the Canadian Wheat Board single desk will be at the Saskatchewan Legislature in Regina today to protest Ritz's attack on democracy and farmers' incomes.

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