

Ontario Regional Office
RR #2, Godfrey,
Ontario K0H 1T0
Tel (613) 273-5545
Fax (613) 273-6290
nfuo@rideaul.net
www.nfu.ca



national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 16, 2008

AUDIT OF AGRICORP WELCOMED BY NFU IN ONTARIO

The National Farmers Union (NFU) was the first Ontario farm organization to call for an audit of Agricorp back in the fall of 2005. “The NFU is pleased to see that Ontario’s Auditor-General has confirmed many of the concerns raised by us,” said Grant Robertson, NFU Ontario Coordinator. “The NFU commends both Agriculture Minister Dombrosky and Auditor General McCarter for leadership and quality of the audit completed.”

Auditor General McCarter makes 17 recommendations regarding Agricorp’s handling of agricultural support programming. These recommendations focus on the Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization Program (CAIS) – suggesting ways to ensure program spending fulfills specific stated goals.

Recommendation 6 focuses on the transparency and timeliness of the CAIS process, something the NFU has long identified as problematic for farmers. The report reads “*To ensure that processing of applications under the CAIS Program is timely and transparent, Agricorp should: establish a fixed processing-time standard (matching the national standard if possible), monitor its achievement, and take corrective action where necessary; -include, with payments to producers, either full details on how it calculated the payment or a brief note about when the producer can expect full details on how his or her payment was calculated.*”

“NFU members and leaders have long been calling for action that would make decisions around CAIS payments less mystical and more transparent and clear. The NFU is pleased to see that Auditor-General McCarter agrees”, said Robertson.

Recommendation 17 reads as follows; “*To enable the public, legislators, and other decision-makers to know whether AgriCorp farm support programs are effective, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs should measure the extent to which the programs help producers remain financially secure and report the results.*”

The NFU has long identified the lack of analysis of the success and outcomes of programming as a major problem within the Ministry, stated Robertson. The NFU is pleased to see this recommendation as far as it goes.

“The NFU expressed concern when the audit was first announced that its mandate and focus was too narrow,” said Robertson. “Given the constraints, the Auditor-General has done a great job addressing concerns raised by farmers. However, it is clear the final recommendation dealing with measurable results and outcomes, and trying to determine whether farmers and the public are well served by policy and programs, needs to be taken further. It was this lack of analysis and the poor results the data showed that was at the heart of the NFU’s decision to file a complaint with the Ontario provincial Ombudsman. The NFU would welcome the Minister launching a full-scale, independent review of all Ministry programming and policies in relation to the long-term goals and desires of healthy multi-generational family farms in Ontario.”

- 30 -

Contact:

Grant Robertson, NFU Ontario Coordinator (519) 353-4033 or (519) 386-1904