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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRASTIC CUTS TO GRAIN COMMISSION WILL HURT FARMERS

The federal government's drastic cuts to Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) research, producer protection and grain quality programs will have a devastating impact on farmers, says Terry Boehm, Vice-President of the National Farmers Union (NFU).

Boehm was responding to testimony by federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, who appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture in Ottawa May 15, one day after the release of the government's spending forecast. The government revealed it would chop CGC producer protection programs by 67%, grain quality programs by almost 50%, and research programs by 60%.

"These cuts will destroy the ability of the Canadian Grain Commission to function by starving it of necessary operating funds," stated Boehm.

Even before the cuts were announced, the Harper Government had begun a process of changing the mandate of the CGC to facilitate the interests of the private grain trade, rather than ensuring farmers' interests were protected. Those changes are contained in Bill C-39, an *Act to Amend the Canada Grain Act* – which is currently being reviewed by the Commons Agriculture Committee. The proposed cuts also coincide with the removal of the Kernel Visual Distinguishability (KVD) system on August 1, 2008, despite the absence of a reliable alternative method to ensure quality standards for Canadian grain exports.

Boehm pointed out that the cuts would reduce the CGC's ability to ensure grain shipments are weighed and inspected fairly. "The principle of bringing fairness to the marketplace, and protecting farmers' interests, was the basic reason for the introduction of the Canada Grain Act in 1912," he said. "Bill C-39, combined with this wholesale slashing of CGC programs and the elimination of the KVD system, puts farmers in a very vulnerable position."

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