



national farmers union
in Union is Strength

NEWS RELEASE

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The National Farmers Union has sent a special request to Federal agricultural officials in Ottawa for additional assistance to Island potato and vegetable growers who were hardest hit by the record rainfall in August - September 2008, states the NFU District Director, Elwin Wyand.

Federal-Provincial disaster money was made available at the rate of one cent per lb. for horticulture and potato crops left unharvested, one cent per lb. for product which was dumped out of warehouses and an additional one cent per lb. was available for clean-up and disinfection of warehouses. Recently the Federal and Provincial governments shared the cost of paying all Island potato and vegetable farmers a cullage adjustment allowance which ranged in the area of \$40 to \$50 per acre, depending on variety, yield, etc. This cullage adjustment money went to all growers regardless of whether or not they suffered severe losses from the 2008 rainfall.

Additional funding is necessary for those potato and vegetable growers who suffered the most severe loss. In some cases a high percentage of the crop was dumped. For example, a potato grower who had the crop insured and who received the disaster money available to date would have received less than half as much in returns as would have been the case if he/she could have had the crop to sell on the market.

Initially \$12.4 million was allotted for disaster funding for Island farmers. However, even if there is a balance in this fund at the end of the day, provincial government officials have stated that no more money will be forthcoming, even for those producers who suffered extreme loss because there is no way to access the funding. NFU officials state that disaster money should be channeled towards the disaster, and it should not be necessary for the disaster to fit the funding rules in order to access payment.

The NFU has requested that the most severely hurt growers of potatoes and vegetables receive an additional meaningful disaster payment either from the balance of the \$12.4 million fund or through additional funding if the need be. The rainfall was a natural disaster of which no one had any control. Help for those farm families most severely affected is essential in order for them to stay in business.

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