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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BILL C-13 JEOPARDIZES FARM INCOMES AND FOOD SAFETY

Bill C-13, *An Act to Amend the Canada Grain Act*, will cost farmers tens of millions of dollars annually, while jeopardizing food safety and the quality standards of Canada's grain exports. "The full implications of this bill are enormous," stated NFU President Stewart Wells. The changes that are lurking beneath the surface are not readily apparent but they will be devastating to Canada's grain farmers."

Debate on Bill C-13 is set to resume any day in the House of Commons. "This bill must not be allowed to pass," stated Wells.

The bill will add tens of millions of dollars of extra costs to farmers. The CWB and farmers will have to spend their own money to replace the destruction of independent testing by the Grain Commission. Regardless of the extra money spent by farmers, the tests will still not be seen to be independent and unbiased. Regardless of whether it's the Canadian Wheat Board that does the test or a contracted private testing company, the testing results will not have the credibility or standing that the current Canadian Grain Commission test has.

Bill C-13 is aimed at deregulating the grain industry, and would fundamentally change the mandate of the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), stated Wells. "It removes the requirement that the CGC operate as a public interest watchdog that regulates the overall grain industry in the 'interests of producers'. Instead, it changes the CGC's role to become a passive service provider that provides grading, weighing and inspection services to grain companies on a fee-for-service basis. Farmers' protections will be reduced to a minimum, with plenty of loopholes for companies to circumvent those limited protections."

Bill C-13 would eliminate inward inspection and weighing of grain, thereby undercutting the CGC's ability to maintain high-quality standards, and putting grain farmers and consumers at risk.

Bill C-13 would also eliminate the requirement that grain companies be licensed and bonded. Eliminating these security provisions would leave farmers holding the bag if a grain company goes bankrupt, noted Wells. "Eliminating this provision will not save farmers any money. It will only increase their risk."

Farmers have not been calling for changes to the Canada Grain Act, concluded Wells. “The pressure to restructure the CGC and reduce its regulatory role has been coming from grain companies. The Harper government appears intent on turning back the clock to the 1800s, when there was no Canadian Grain Commission, no Canadian Wheat Board, no public research, no fairness, no equity, no justice and no market power for farmers.”

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