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national farmers union

In Union Is Strength

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David Anderson's attack on CWB contingency fund off the mark

To the editor,

To no one's surprise, David Anderson, MP for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, has launched another attack on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Only a few years ago, Anderson made false accusations against the CWB in the House of Commons relating to CWB marketing—accusations that he was afraid to repeat outside the House because he knew he would be successfully sued. And then later Anderson's tactics backfired on him again when his government tried to publicly embarrass one of our international customers—Algeria. In that case, Anderson's hand-picked CEO contradicted the government slander at Committee hearings.

The CWB, with its price pooling, government guarantees, and single-desk selling, was created to minimize the huge risks that are involved in marketing the very large volumes of grain grown in western Canada. Anderson and his anti-CWB friends have worked very hard to expose farmers and the CWB to more and more of that marketing risk—and they have succeeded in forcing the CWB to produce marketing options which inherently carry higher risk.

This higher marketing risk has created the need for a “contingency fund”, and now Anderson is complaining about the use of that “self-insurance” fund to protect farmers and mitigate the risk.

With the extreme market volatility last year, some grain companies went broke, while others incurred massive debts due to the inability to place timely hedges on grain sales and increased fuel costs. Two of the largest grain companies in the world, Cargill and Bunge, complained publicly that the Chicago Board of Trade futures trading system was “broken”, and even they called for massive reforms to the so-called “free-market”.

Rather than work on the real problems of grain marketing, Anderson is still stuck in the rut of using potentially libelous statements to misrepresent the CWB's marketing system. Perhaps Anderson's vitriol is meant to cover up the fact that it is the Conservative MPs like himself and Randy Hoback who are currently being investigated by the RCMP in relation to the mailing list that they used last fall as they used taxpayers' money to attempt to sway a “farmer” vote. Unable to distract farmers by wasting taxpayers'

money, Anderson has now had to revert to his previous methods. We are just incredibly fortunate that the elected farmers are in charge of the CWB.

Yours truly,

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