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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW GM VARIETIES MUST PASS MARKET IMPACT ASSESSMENT:
BILL C-474 CRITICAL TO PROTECTING FARMERS**

SASKATOON, Sask.—The NFU would like to urge all Parliamentarians and, indeed, all Canadians to support private member’s Bill C-474. If passed, the Bill will “amend the *Seeds Regulations* to require that an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.”

NFU President Terry Boehm said that if genetically modified (GM) crops have potential negative impacts, they should not be released. “This market harm assessment is something that must be done and something that would help prevent the huge economic harm visited upon farmers, and the country as a whole, by GM contamination,” said Boehm.

Bill C-474 was introduced by NDP MP and Agriculture Critic Alex Atamanenko. The Bill comes up for second reading and debate on Wednesday, March 17. “This is a chance for MPs to make a difference, by supporting Bill C-474 when it comes to a vote following second reading,” said Boehm.

He continued: “If we had used a market-harm criterion for assessing GM crops, we may have avoided the disaster we are experiencing with GM-contaminated flax. Flax prices have collapsed and markets have closed because of contamination by an old GM variety of flax called Triffid. This variety passed through our regulatory system unimpeded—and would pass through today—because there is no regard for market consequences in our system. We are potentially looking at GM wheat and GM alfalfa on the horizon and the negative market consequences exemplified by the flax experience will be repeated if we do not regard the market impact of GM varieties,” said Boehm.

For several years, and in many venues, the NFU has advanced the case that potential market harm to farmers must be a core consideration when assessing GM varieties. The NFU worked to have market impact retained as a criterion in the Prairie Registration Recommending Committee for Grains (PRRCG) process. NFU officials worked in the CWB’s RIONAP (Responsible Introduction Of New Agricultural Products) process to get a market harm assessment framework put into place in Canada. And the NFU has written to government Ministers over the past six years asking for the same process.

Boehm concluded: “GM crops cannot be called back once released into the environment. Many of our markets, particularly premium markets, do not want these crops. Agricultural crops are a huge part of the Canadian economy. And if we continue to contaminate our fields with GM varieties without regard for market consequences, we will all suffer.”

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