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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NFU CONVENTION TOLD SUPPLY MANAGEMENT WORKS**

**REGINA, Sask.**—“Of all the institutions that farmers have tried using to solve the perennial problem of market power—collective bargaining, co-operatives, ‘new age co-ops’, single-desk selling, and supply management—none of the others have come anywhere near the effectiveness of supply management in improving farm incomes. This is the key lesson our history teaches us,” said NFU member Ellard Powers.

Powers has farmed for nearly 50 years in Ontario. In the 1960s, he helped build Canada’s milk supply-management system. He served as the Chairman and CEO of the Canadian Dairy Commission from 1973 to 1976. Powers addressed the NFU Convention as part of a panel on “The Past, Present, and Future of Co-ops and Orderly Marketing.”

Powers noted: “In Canadian agriculture today, the biggest difference between farmers is whether what they produce is supply managed or not. In supply managed sectors—dairy, poultry, and eggs—farmers can expect to work hard and make a reasonable living. In other sectors, they cannot even count on getting back their cost of production.”

In Canada, the farm income crisis has ravaged export-oriented farm sectors such as grains, oilseeds, and hogs. By comparison, farmers within the supply management system which focuses on the domestic market have been relatively unscathed.

Powers outlined the circumstances that led farmers to establish the milk supply-management system: low prices, dis-honest buyers, and erratic demand. Powers warned, however, that the supply management system faces threats both from without, by trade agreements and globalization, and from within, by farmers who don’t understand the system and never experienced the low prices and market disorder that spurred farmers to create the supply management system.

He concluded: “History gives us a task: to defend and preserve our supply management systems against the forces that would undermine and destroy them. We must exercise eternal vigilance to protect what we have, and at the same time draw inspiration from those who built those systems. That way we can go on creating ways to strengthen farmer power in the marketplace.”

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**Powers, Ollikka, and Qualman are at the Travelodge Hotel in Regina at the NFU Convention until December 1. Contact them at (306) 586-3443**