

National Office
2717 Wentz Ave.
Saskatoon, Sask., S7K 4B6
Tel (306) 652-9465
Fax (306) 664-6226



national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

November 2, 2011

Open Letter to
Hon. Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Via Fax: (613) 773-1081

Dear Minister Ritz:

In solidarity with prairie grain farmers, the National Farmers Union (NFU) in Ontario, is asking that farmers be given their democratic right to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). If passed, Bill C-18, the 'Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act,' introduced by your government on October 18, will be devastating for family farms across western Canada.

The CWB is a unique institution, created by Canadian farmers, to give farmers real power in the marketplace. Without the power the CWB's single desk, farmers will return to being held captive by a handful of powerful, multinational grain companies. More of the wealth created on Canadian farms will leave our rural communities, and go straight into the pockets these giant grain buyers.

Section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act requires that changes to the single desk be made through a democratic process among prairie grain farmers. Therefore, the future of the CWB is not up to MPs in Ottawa, but farmers themselves. A few years ago farmers in Ontario were granted a vote regarding the future of their single desk selling agency, the Ontario Wheat Board. Prairie grain farmers must be given the same dignity, and must be allowed to choose whether or not to maintain the single desk of the CWB.

Prairie grain farmers continue to show strong support for the CWB. They have always elected at least eight out of ten pro-single desk supporters from among their peers to serve on the CWB's board of directors. Moreover, in the recent plebiscite held this past summer, 62 percent of wheat farmers and 51 percent of barley farmers voted to maintain the single desk. Therefore, farmers themselves must be front and center in any debate concerning the future of the CWB.

As Ontario farmers, committed to standing in solidarity with our fellow farmers in western Canada, we ask you to let farmers decide the fate of the CWB, through a democratic process. We further ask you to cease your efforts to destroy the CWB which will lead to the destruction of family grain farms. A democratically elected government in Canada should act in the interests of Canadians, not in the interests of multinational grain corporations.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Dama, NFU Region 3 (Ontario) Coordinator
On behalf of Regional Council, National Farmers Union, Region 3 (Ontario)
R.R. 5 Guelph, ON
office@nfuontario.ca