

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



NFU SAYS HARPER GOVERNMENT HAS BULLIED AND OUTRAGED PRAIRIE GRAIN FARMERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Saskatoon, Sask. – The National Farmers Union (NFU) says that the Harper government hasn't deceived prairie wheat and barley farmers with their dual market rhetoric. "The NFU has always maintained that a dual market is not possible. It's the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) with the single desk, or not CWB at all. Harper has known this all along, and the legislation his government introduced yesterday proves that," stated NFU President Terry Boehm.

The Marketing Freedom For Grain Farmers Act creates a temporary, shadow CWB (without the single desk), which has until 2016 to either present a plan to privatize, or be dissolved altogether. The Harper government has allowed the shadow CWB to maintain its government guarantees for five years. However, the shadow CWB was not given regulatory access to grain handlers or seed capital, which would be crucial for its survival. The CWB has no assets, and therefore the new entity will be completely dependent on its competitors for such things as access to handling facilities. "This new entity should really be called 'Fast Gerry's Temporary Discount Grain Company,' because Ritz and Harper really have no intention of having it survive in the open market," said Boehm.

"This amounts to a wholesale attack by Harper on his own people. In 2008, he said he would walk over anyone who got in his way. Less than two weeks ago, he told farmers he would run them over like a train. He has said over and over that he would create a dual market. It's just lies and bullying," stated Boehm. "By introducing this legislation, Harper has refused to recognize the democratic right of farmers to decide the fate of the CWB themselves. The new legislation eliminates the ten directors that farmers elected to represent them, and it just gives away for free the real market power that farmers had on their side and paid for themselves," continued Boehm.

"What is absolutely clear now, if it never was before, is that Harper does not care about prairie grain farmers. All he cares about are his ideological obsessions and pleasing his friends in the big grain and railway companies. This is an outrage!" stated NFU Region 5 (Manitoba) Coordinator Ian Robson.

For more information, please contact:

Terry Boehm

NFU President

h. (306) 255-2880

c. (306) 255-7638

Ian Robson

NFU Region 5 (Manitoba)

h. (204) 858-2479

Kevin Wipf

NFU Executive Director

(306) 652-9465