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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU CALLS ON MINISTER RITZ TO QUIT HIDING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Saskatoon, Sask. – The NFU is calling on Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz to quit hiding behind closed doors as his government steamrolls legislation through Parliament to kill the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Yesterday, several farmers attempted to attend an event at which the Minister was to give a speech, at the Rahr Malting Canada plant in Alix, Alberta. “It is really quite troubling that Ritz does not want to allow farmers to hear his speeches. He supposedly has come to bring us good news. You’d think that they would be happy to invite us in to hear about it,” stated NFU Region 7 (Alberta) Coordinator Jan Slomp.

“Harper and Ritz have been collecting endorsements for ending our CWB, from all the industries that are looking forward to generating greater profits by paying lower prices to grain farmers. Even the Conservative MPs should be able to see there is something wrong with this picture, if they care at all about farmers and their communities,” stated NFU member Ken Larsen.

“These plants are announcing these expansion plans because they know that without the CWB in the picture, they will be able to access grain from farmers at cheaper prices. That might be good news for these plants, but it is very bad news for farmers. Ritz knows that, and that’s why he’s hiding behind these gates today,” stated NFU member Darrell Stokes.

“This is just a big smokescreen. The Harper government is forcing the legislation through Parliament, while making these announcements. They are hoping farmers won’t notice before the legislation is passed and the CWB is finished off for good,” stated NFU member Dale Fankhanel.

“It is very important that all Canadians take note of what’s being done here. If the government was really interested in hearing the concerns and suggestions of its citizens, in this case prairie grain farmers, they would be holding consultations throughout the countryside through the fall and winter, and they would be allowing us to attend their speeches. Instead, they are shutting us out and ramming their legislation down our throats, before we even have time finish up our fall work. If they can do this with the CWB, they will do it with other policies important to Canadians such as health care,” concluded Slomp.

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