



February 10th, 2011

FARM BUSINESSES HURT BY FAILURE TO PASS BILL C-474

Saskatoon, SK – The National Farmers Union (NFU) is expressing its disappointment that Bill C-474 was voted down in the House of Commons yesterday evening. “This bill is a clear loss for Canadian farmers, and a clear win for corporations like Monsanto and Syngenta whose only concern is their own profitability,” stated NFU Vice President Colleen Ross. Bill C-474 was designed to protect Canadian farmers by requiring that an examination of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed were permitted.

“Government is always telling farmers it wants them to be more business-like and that trade is that path to prosperity. Well isn’t it sound business practice to analyze the potential marketability of a product to our trade partners before you start trying to sell it? That’s all this bill asked for,” continued Ross.

“We already have examples of where our trade partners shut our farmers out of their markets because of concerns about contamination by GMO material. In recent years the Europeans have rejected a shipment of Canadian flax, and we have virtually lost the opportunity to produce organic canola for organic markets due to concerns about the contamination of GMO material,” stated Ross.

The Liberals were the swing vote on Bill C-474, since the Conservatives had already declared they were voting against it, while the NDP and Bloc Quebecois had indicated support. Prior to the vote some Liberals had stated that they would be voting against the bill because it did not contain enough detail regarding implementation.

“The Liberals really showed a lack of leadership here. They used the same excuses throughout, which was just a big cop-out. A bill is enabling legislation, the implementation details get worked out in committee and by the bureaucracy. The details of this bill could have been worked out once it was passed. The NFU is very concerned about the apparent unwillingness of our elected politicians to stand up to the corporate lobby on behalf of the best interests of Canadians,” stated Ross.

“Since the Liberals were so concerned that the bill was not complete, the NFU looks forward to seeing them introduce a new, more capable bill on this in the near future,” said Ross.

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