

September 18, 2006

Hon. Chuck Strahl, M.P.
Minister of Agriculture and Agri Food, and Minister For The Canadian Wheat Board
930 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5

Dear Minister Strahl:

RE: DEFEAT OF BILL C-300 AN ACT TO AMEND THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

We are writing to you on a matter of urgent priority to Ontario's farm communities.

This Fall, Bill C-300, An Act to Amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, will come before the House of Commons for Second Reading.

Under the banner of "freedom of choice", this Bill, if passed, will destroy one of the most important policy instruments Canadian farmers have to equalize market power in the face of a highly concentrated grain sector.

The Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is a farmer-controlled organization that markets wheat and barley grown by Western Canadian producers. Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the CWB is the largest single seller of wheat and barley in the world, holding more than twenty per cent (20%) of the international market.

As every respected farm economist who has studied it will affirm, the Canadian Wheat Board is a well-designed and sustainable policy mechanism that delivers price equity to Canadian grain growers - equity that amounts to over \$800 million a year in benefits to Prairie communities. (Ref:-www.nfu.ca)

American grain interests have been gunning for the CWB for over twenty years. Canada has won every trade challenge. We should be touting the CWB model for the world to see.

Instead, Bill-C300 would wipe it off the table, and with it, the future of Canadian agriculture.

Seemingly innocuous, Bill C-300 purports to simply offer growers “choice” in the marketing of their wheat. When introduced in the House, it will be couched in terms such as “grower choice” and “support for bio-fuels development”. Make no mistake Bill C-300 will destroy the single desk selling authority of the Canadian Wheat Board, opening the door to take-over of Canada’s grain sector by powerful, transnational grain conglomerates.

This issue is not about debating the merits of the CWB. Surely we must be able to agree that farmers in a given commodity sector know what is working best for their sector.

If WTO and NAFTA have sanctioned the Canadian Wheat Board, why would Ottawa now be so ready to destroy it, placing Canada’s grain sector in the hands of U.S. based transnationals?

The CWB Act expressly forbids the Minister to change the Act without the express consent of growers. However, Minister Strahl you say that doesn’t matter. It matters very much to us because!

If this can happen to the Canadian Wheat Board, it can happen to supply management.

Destroying the independence and sustainability of Canada’s grain, dairy, poultry and egg farmers will destroy the fabric of Canada’s farm sector, and with it all hope of food security and food sovereignty.

This is bad for Canada and cannot be allowed to happen. Bill C-300 must be defeated in the House this Fall.

Attached is background information. For more information on the background please call: Terry Pugh, Executive Director, National Farmers Union, Phone: 306-652-9465
nfu@nfu.ca

Sincerely,

Robert Emerson, President
Bruce County Federation of Agriculture
Encls.

Cc: Leona Dombrowsky, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
National Farmers Union (Ontario)
Wayne Easter, M.P. Liberal Agriculture Critic
Charlie Angus, M.P. NDP Agriculture Critic
Andre Bellavance, M.P. Bloc Quebecois Agriculture Critic
Paul Steckle, MP Huron-Bruce
Larry Miller, MP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.