



MEDIA RELEASE

October 7, 2008

Political Parties Talk Producer Payment Security Part four of a five-part series

Winnipeg – Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), and Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) sent a five-part election questionnaire to the Conservative, Green, Liberal, and NDP party leaders in September. The farm organizations, representing producers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, were looking at priority areas for agriculture prior to the upcoming election. The four parties were asked to clearly outline their plans regarding five areas critical to rural voters: the environment, farm input prices, transportation, producer payment security, and working with farm organizations.

Continuing this week APAS, KAP, and WRAP will be sharing the responses received from each party to five specific questions presented. This will provide Prairie voters the opportunity to examine the party platforms before casting their ballots in the election on October 14.

All three organizations were pleased to see the prompt and positive responses received from three leaders and their recognition of the importance of agriculture to our national economy and unique Canadian identity. Today the parties outline their positions regarding producer payment security. *(Party responses are presented below in the order they were received.)*

Canada needs a government that supports agriculture, and also implements the policies that reflect that support. KAP, APAS, and WRAP want to see a move towards a long term plan that ensures producers' sustainability—both financially and environmentally. In this election, agriculture must be a priority and all parties are encouraged to clearly communicate their goals to farmers and the rest of the industry.

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For more information, please contact:

Ian Wishart, KAP President. Cell: (204) 856-6964.

Glenn Blakley, APAS President. Cell: (306) 745-7257.

Humphrey Banack, WRAP President. Cell: (780) 679-4449.

Kristen Lucyshyn, KAP Communications. Office: (204) 697-1140.

Nial Kuyek, APAS General Manager. Office: (306) 789-7774 (ext. 229).

Backgrounder: 2008 Federal Election Questionnaire response to Q4



2008 Election Questionnaire Responses to Question Four.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) of Manitoba and Alberta's Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP) sent an election questionnaire to the Conservative, Green, Liberal, and NDP party leaders in September. The four parties were asked to clearly outline their plans regarding five critical areas: the environment, farm input prices, transportation, grain payment security, and working with farm organizations. Today the parties outline their plans to protect provide protection to Canadian producers. *(Party responses are presented in the order they were received.)*

"Bill C-39 was introduced into the last parliamentary session, and would have eliminated financial protection for farmers under the Canadian Grain Commission bonding requirements for grain buyers. It is extremely important that producers have a mechanism in place for their financial protection and security when delivering grains.

If elected, what legislative or regulatory measures will your party take to ensure producers are protected in the marketplace?"

Liberal Party of Canada

"The original Canadian Grain Act has stated that the Canadian Grain Commission's mandate is to "act in the interests of producers". The new bill, introduced by the Conservatives, removes that phrase and changes the focus of the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) to value-added activities for the grain industry.

Refusing to provide any economic analysis for their proposal, the Conservatives fail to prove that their changes are made in the best economic interest of producers – just as they failed to do with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board. The Liberal Party believes that the CGC can be improved in accordance with the Standing Committee recommendations – most of which have been ignored by this government."

Green Party of Canada

"With growing concerns over economic and climatic instability, a reliable domestic food supply is essential. Family owned and operated farms of small to medium size constitute the most reliable, high quality and economical food production system, now and into our uncertain future. The Green Party of



Canada supports family farmers as environmental stewards and as efficient producers of nutritious food.

At the core of a Green agriculture policy is a commitment to ensure that Canadian farmers earn a stable living wage and have safe working conditions. This can be done by ensuring that farm support payments are farm-based (not production based) in order to encourage more farms and farmers. Moreover, the Green party is committed to a stable Canadian Wheat Board that will ensure the fair-trading of high quality Canadian grains. These solutions, coupled with a new emphasis on local food production and culinary tourism, provide the basis for a vibrant agriculture sector.

NDP

“The Canadian Grain Commission is the result of an act of 1912, which established three grain commissioners to oversee the regulation of the movement of grain from the country elevator to the point where it was loaded for export or processed in Canada. It has functioned in the interest of farmers. One of the main reasons it exists is to retain quality, so the wheat we send overseas has a stamp of quality from Canada.

Today, approximately 700 dedicated employees arbitrate disagreements over grain and weight, inspect grain passing in and out of terminal elevators, license and regulate elevators and grain companies and, most important, administer the Canadian grading system. Canadian grains are trusted and respected throughout the world due to the honesty and thoroughness of the Canadian Grain Commission.

Bill C-39, as it stands, has a potential threat to Canadian grain producers. New Democrats know the Grain Commission has served as an independent referee to settle disputes between Canadian grain producers and the powerful companies that buy and export. It is no secret that our system of doing things in Canada is under attack.

C-39 was flawed right from the start. Instead of having a study done by a parliamentary committee, the Harper government used a report prepared by a polling firm whose very existence depends on contracts from government and large corporations.

The Harper Conservatives' plan to eliminate the requirement for grain buyers to post security bonds and expose grain producers to financial harm in the event of a grain buyer bankruptcy or refusal to pay shows that the Conservatives are more concerned with protecting the interests of big agri-business than farm families. New Democrats realize this and fought hard against not only C-39 but also Stephen Harper's plan to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board. New Democrats



will continue to fight on behalf of farm families and would never consider introducing a bill so harmful to the interests of farmers as C-39.”

Conservative Party

APAS, KAP, and WRAP sent identical questionnaires to all parties requesting a response by Friday, September 19, and that deadline was extended to Friday, September 26. To date we have not received a response from the party.