

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2010

Grain Growers work to reverse Bill C-474 decision at Ag Committee

The Grain Growers of Canada are asking to be called as witnesses to testify at committee on Bill C-474, an NDP private member's bill which would have harsh effects for Canadian farmers.

The bill, which would change seed regulations to make it more difficult for Canadian farmers to buy new plant technologies, passed second reading on Wednesday with support from the NDP, Bloc Québécois, Liberals and two Conservatives.

The bill is now headed to Parliament's Standing Committee on Agriculture where witnesses will be called to testify.

Current seed regulations require years of extensive testing of new plant technologies and are based on solid principles of sound science. The NDP private member's bill would encourage rejection of environmentally friendly new crops.

"The NDP are simply ideologically opposed to genetically modified foods," said Doug Robertson, President of the Grain Growers of Canada. "Without any credible scientific ground to stand on, their argument is based on unsubstantiated, fear-based claims."

The Liberals have made it clear that they want to have a discussion about genetically modified foods at committee. They have a long history of supporting sound science and approving new plant technologies.

"Farmers rely heavily on new technologies to produce crops that are healthier for consumers, more environmentally friendly with less pesticides, and put more dollars in our pockets," said Robertson. "This well meaning, but poorly conceived bill ignores the fact that farmers have overwhelmingly adopted these new crops."

"We are confident that once the Committee hears from real farmers, this legislation will be defeated," said Robertson.

The Grain Growers of Canada represent over 80,000 successful farmers through its membership organizations who grow wheat, oats, barley, canola, corn, peas, lentils and triticale.

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For more information:

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Growers Association

Western Canadian
Wheat Growers
Association

April 16th, 2010

Mr. Larry Miller MP
Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Re: Bill C-474

Dear Mr. Miller,

The Grain Growers of Canada, representing over 80,000 successful farmers through our member associations, are requesting the opportunity to appear at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

We are seriously concerned over the lack of factual information raised during second reading by the Members of Parliament who supported Bill C-474.

As farmers we need rational decisions to be made on facts, not fear and innuendo.

Canadian farmers have eagerly adopted new technologies and want to continue to be on the leading edge of innovation. This gives us a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

We therefore would welcome the opportunity to testify as to how access to leading edge research will not only benefit farmers, but also consumers here in Canada and in the growing world population.

We are confident that once all Committee members are aware of the benefits, and understand the amount of testing for human, animal and environmental concerns required for new products prior to approval, the Standing Committee will reverse the decision taken at second reading.

Please contact our executive director, Richard Phillips to make suitable arrangements once you know when the legislation will be at Committee.

Sincerely,

Doug Robertson
President, Grain Growers of Canada