

MEDIA RELEASE

Trade Injury Compensation Program Idea Catching On

April 25, 2002: “Support is growing among farm groups for the Grain Growers of Canada’s (GGC) innovative policy solution to the harm being done to farmers by unfair trade practices in the US and the EU,” says Wheat Grower President Art Enns.

Enns was responding to the news that three prairie farm organizations, APAS, KAP and WRAP have expressed their support for the GGC’s Trade Injury Compensation Program (TICP), which is also supported by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in unity with the GGC. Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Clay Serby has also announced his support for the program. The TICP would compensate grain and oilseed producers for the economic injury they are suffering due to foreign subsidies.

“As a founding member of the GGC, the Wheat Growers were active participants in the development of the TICP,” says Enns. “Our members passed a policy failure offset resolution at our annual convention that is fully realized in the TICP. We strongly believe this policy proposal will go a long way to leveling the playing field in the farm subsidy game practiced by the Americans and the Europeans, particularly in the grains and oilseeds sector.”

The Europeans heavily subsidize their farmers and make no apologies for what they see as a social policy. The Americans claim to be champions of liberalized trade but pour billions into their farm program with direct subsidies skewed heavily towards the grain sector. Canadian farmers have to compete for sales in a world market that is saturated with grain because subsidies are encouraging farmers in the US and the EU to overproduce.

“The World Trade Organization will eventually bring about fair trade practices but the process takes many years and Canadian farmers can’t afford to wait that long,” adds Enns. “We are encouraged by the growing momentum of grassroots support for the TICP. We expected the federal government to take this proposal seriously and initiate action that will help Canadian grain and oilseed producers bridge the income gap we face in the current world trade situation. Without a meaningful effort to level the playing field, grains and oilseeds producers will once again be left alone in the wind.”

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