

**Renfrew County Local
National Farmers Union
Ontario**

President: Dave Mackay Phone/Fax 613-582-7379
Secretary/Treasurer: Laretta Rice Phone/Fax 613-649-8211

NEWS RELEASE

June 7, 2010

**CONSERVATIVES MAY BE READY TO RETHINK CLOSURE OF FRONTENAC
INSTITUTION, BUT ONE FARM IS NOT ENOUGH**

Beachburg, ON – Dave Mackay, President of the Renfrew County National Farmers Union advises that the federal government may be set to rethink the closure of one prison farm to deflect mounting public outcry. The Save Our Prison Farms campaign reported the Frontenac Institution prison farm (in Kingston, Ontario), one of six Canadian farms, was to have been toured by Member of Parliament Scott Reid last Friday. At the last hour M.P. Scott Reid was unable to visit the prison farm due to a commitment in Ottawa.

“The Frontenac farm is important, but the government is missing the point if they think that putting one farm on life support will address public concerns or stop thousands of supporters from keeping up the pressure”, said Dianne Dowling, president of National Farmers Union Local 316.

“This is about more than one farm,” said Andrew McCann of Urban Agriculture Kingston. “The dismemberment of the prison farms ignores Canadian values of rehabilitation and justice while undermining the ability of communities to feed themselves. The government needs to wake up to these broadly held values: revitalize the prison farms, stop Americanizing our justice system, and shelve their plans to build super prisons where the farms now operate.”

“We are trying to wake them up, but they are hitting the snooze button and hoping we will go away.”

The Save Our Prison Farms campaign has made its position clear in the revitalization plan outlined on its website at <http://saveourprisonfarms.ca/revitalizing-the-farms/>.

Sister Pauline Lally of the Sisters of Providence, who spoke along with Margaret Atwood at Sunday’s rally (where 1000 citizens came out in support), explained, “The campaign will accept no less than a moratorium on prison farm closures and an independent review and report, as called for by the House of Commons Public Safety and National Committee in a motion passed April 1, 2010.” These demands were pinned to the door of CSC headquarters in Kingston during last Sunday’s march.

“The government is trying to rush the closures along by covertly auctioning off the three dairy herds from farms in New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba before the end of June,” said Jeff Peters, director and past president of the Frontenac Cattleman’s Association.

Although the federal government still denies it, an auction of the New Brunswick dairy herd is being publicly advertised on the Atlantic Stockyards website. The date for the Kingston auction remains a secret. A continent-wide bidding process on the contract to replace the milk provided by these dairy herds closed Monday, June 7.

“All three herds and all six farms must be saved,” said Peters. “These farms and cattle, in fact, belong to all Canadians and the vast majority of us believe the loss of the prison farms would be an injustice to our democracy.” See www.saveourprisonfarms.ca for more details.

Mackay added, locally the Renfrew County National Farmers Union, along with other local organizations, farm groups, and individuals also recognized the importance of those prison farms. Many took the time to send in cards and e-mails to our local M.P. Cheryl Gallant and also to the Public Safety Minister Vic Toews. We sincerely request that they continue to keep up those contacts. The Hon. Vic Toews phone number is 613-992-3128, fax 613-995-1049 and e-mail toews.v@parl.gc.ca.

Contact: Dave Mackay 613-582-7379