



PRESS RELEASE

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Agricultural producers have been worried since the publication of the document on the industry's challenges

“PRODUCERS WANT THE SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO REMAIN INTACT, NOTHING LESS”

- André Bellavance

Ottawa, Friday, May 4, 2007 – “The publication of the document on the ‘challenges’ in Geneva by the chair of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations, Crawford Falconer, shows us that, now more than ever, the Harper government must support the Bloc Québécois motion adopted unanimously in the House of Commons in November 2005 in order to vigorously defend the supply management system,” said the Bloc Québécois Agriculture and Agri-Food Critic and MP for Richmond-Arthabaska, **André Bellavance**.

This document caused concern when it was made public this week among milk, poultry and egg producers, since it pays no attention to their concerns about sensitive products. According to the producers, if the final agreement from the Doha round reflects the contents of the document in its current form, the results will be devastating for the Canadian sectors governed by supply management.

André Bellavance said that the Bloc motion specified that the sectors under supply management must not be submitted to any over-quota tariff reductions or tariff quota expansion.

“The remarks that the Minister of International Trade, David Emerson, made to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food did nothing to calm the fears of the agricultural producers under the supply management system, a system that generates 45% of Quebec’s agricultural economy. The Minister confirmed that Canada will not be withdrawing from the Doha round negotiations at the World Trade Organization and that concessions are likely because Canada will have to sign any agreement reached. His colleague, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Chuck Strahl said the same to the Committee last Tuesday, explaining that Canada could not find itself isolated. That attitude makes us think that the producers are going to lose out,” fumed the MP for Richmond-Arthabaska.

While the Conservatives are telling anyone prepared to listen that they support the supply management system, **André Bellavance** wonders about these famous “concessions” that the Minister is preparing to make. “How can we trust this Conservative government, which claims it supports supply management while announcing that it is prepared to make compromises and that it has established a process that might well abolish the Canadian Wheat Board, the other major collective marketing tool in Canada? Our fear is that the federal government will sign an agreement even though it penalizes the producers under supply management. The Bloc Québécois is thus asking the Minister and his government to meet the objectives of the motion of 22 November 2005 to the letter,” **Mr. Bellavance** concluded.

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