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For Immediate Release:

Grain Growers look forward to working with new Parliament

(Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Ottawa) – The Grain Growers of Canada wish to congratulate the Conservatives on their 2011 federal election win and to congratulate all newly elected or re-elected Members of Parliament. “We would like to offer our sincere congratulations to the Conservatives,” says Stephen Vandervalk, President of the Grain Growers of Canada. “We have been very pleased with the Conservative’s trade focus. Aggressive trade policy is opening up new doors for Canadian farmers and to remain competitive in the global marketplace, we need the government to continue moving in that direction.”

GGC Members:

Atlantic Grains Council

Alberta Barley Commission

Alberta Grain Commission

Alberta Oat Rye &
Triticale Association

Alberta Pulse Growers

Alberta Winter Wheat
Producers Commission

British Columbia Grain
Producers Association

Canadian Canola
Growers Association

Manitoba Corn Growers
Association

Prairie Oat Growers
Association

Western Barley
Growers Association

Western Canadian
Wheat Growers Assoc.

“We urge the new Government to keep agriculture at the forefront of its priorities and to continue to move forward on many of its commitments including the rail review recommendations, the European Union trade negotiations, and the planned updates to business risk management programming,” says Vandervalk.

During the election, the GGC outlined many key issues facing farmers and proposed common sense changes and solutions (**GGC policy advice attached**). “The Grain Growers urge the federal government to pursue these GGC agriculture policy proposals,” says Vandervalk. “These ideas will go a long way to improving the state of farming across Canada.”

The Grain Growers of Canada would also like to recognise all candidates that ran for political office this election. “Seeking to serve our country in Parliament takes a special kind of courage,” says Vandervalk. “No matter who wins, you really need to respect those who step forward to run.”

“Agriculture is one of Canada’s most important industries. Issues like food safety, research, trade and sustainable production are important to all Canadians,” concludes Vandervalk. “At the Grain Growers we believe the government doesn’t owe farmers a living, but it does owe Canadian farmers a policy environment where we can make a living.”

Representing over 80,000 successful wheat, barley, canola, oat, corn, pea and lentil farmers across Canada, the Grain Growers of Canada is well known as the national voice of Canadian grain farmers.

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For more information:

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BACKGROUND

Grain Growers of Canada's agriculture policy advice

The Grain Growers of Canada urges the incoming federal government to proactively address the following key agricultural issues (in no particular order):

1. Issue: Rail Transportation

The current Rail Service Review holds potential to permanently improve our logistics. Pulse Canada has clearly documented how poor service is costing farmers far more per tonne than a costing review could hope to recover.

Policy Solution: Farmers are looking for a commitment that the new government will move quickly and decisively to implement both the recommendations of the Service Review and the further commitments of the previous Conservative government.

2. Issue: Research and Innovation

AAFC core agricultural research funding is lower today than it was in 1994. It would take an annual increase of \$26 million a year for each of the next 10 years to get us back to the 1994 inflation adjusted level.

Policy Solution: Commit to Canadian farmers and processors that the incoming government will not only increase funding for public research, but that it will find ways to greatly increase the opportunities for private-public partnerships. Further that the new government will support strengthening the ability of farm groups to apply and collect check-offs so all farmers contribute equally to research.

3. Issue: Trade

Canada is blessed with an abundance of land and water. We export a large percentage of our wheat, canola, pork and beef. We have the potential to make substantial gains at both the Doha round of WTO, and in various bi-lateral trade negotiations. The incoming government needs to continue to be proactive in this area.

Policy Solution: The new government needs to seek aggressive results for our export sectors in both bi-lateral and WTO negotiations and also commit to properly resource the Market Access Secretariat as a trade agreement is only as good as your ability to enforce it.

4. Issue: Grain Marketing

A substantial majority of young farmers no longer support the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly. Further, a clear majority of barley producers no longer support barley remaining in a monopoly. (Source: CWB's 2010 Farmer Survey)

Policy Solution: The incoming government needs to support removing barley from the CWB monopoly and commit to cleaning up the voters list to ensure only real farmers are receiving ballots. Further it should consider working with farm groups and the CWB to discuss ways to allow wheat producers the freedom to market their crop, yet ensure the CWB remains a strong and effective marketer for the producers who wish to use it.

5. Issue: Environment and Sustainability

There is growing public and retailer awareness and demand for goods produced “sustainably”.

Policy Solution: The new government should support a greater increased capital cost allowance for equipment like the newer low emission engines and Global Positioning Systems so farmers can ensure they are using the least amount of fertilizer and inputs with minimal overlap and waste. Further, the incoming government should support the ethanol and biodiesel industries.

6. Issue: Biotechnology and Regulatory Environment

There are consumer concerns over new technologies, but the world’s population is still growing rapidly and food production is estimated to need to increase by 50% in the coming years. This will not be achieved through slashing yields to farm organically, or to only rely on conventional plant breeding. Private and public plant research is capable of meeting the growing needs, but only if there is a sound regulatory environment.

Policy Solution: The incoming government needs to commit to implementing the Smart Regs initiative that has been stalled. Further, it needs to make a clear and unequivocal commitment to decisions based on sound science.

7. Issue: Business Risk Management Programs

Although it may be politically expedient to agree to putting money into provincial risk management programs, this is not an advisable route, if it leads to potential countervail action. We urge the new government not to go down this road.

Policy Solutions: We urge you to commit to improving the existing suite of programs (Invest, Stability, Insurance) with a focus on predictability, effectiveness and bankability so we can reduce ad hoc assistance.