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**Grain Growers of Canada call for immediate relief from ‘harvest from hell’**

*Following a difficult harvest season, Canadian farmers should not be expected to pay increased taxes at a time when they can afford it least*

**OTTAWA (January 29, 2020)** - On behalf of 65,000 Canadian grain, oilseed and pulse producers, the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) are calling for immediate action to support Canadian farmers who have just been through the harvest from hell.

In the short term, GGC farmer members should be directly reimbursed from the federal government for the millions of extra dollars in carbon tax they have paid to dry their grain.

“The 2019 harvest season has put undue burdens on farmers’ livelihoods and every part of the country has been hit hard,” said GGC chair Jeff Nielsen from his farm in Olds, AB. “Beyond just the crop left in the field, farmers have faced major grain drying expenses, courtesy of the federal carbon tax, to ensure at least some crops make it to market.”

After a difficult 2018, where net farm incomes dropped 45 per cent from the year prior, the trend has only worsened. Our federal government must recognize that farmers should not be faced with an additional tax burden that reduces their competitiveness in the global marketplace. Farmers contribute to environmental sustainability by sequestering carbon, reducing water and input use, and improving soil health. However, with no alternative to fossil fuels to dry grain, the carbon tax fails to recognize farmers’ contribution and instead relies on punitive measures.

GGC is working with member groups to compile data to provide to the Hon. Minister Bibeau to allow her department to find the best way forward. That said, this issue is too important to delay. The government needs to be looking at all available options to offer relief to farm families who are facing mounting costs. This is only a short-term solution, however. Grain drying is an annual requirement for many Canadian farmers. That is why the long-term solution is to fully exempt all fuels used on farming operations.

With a changing climate, there could be future years where significant grain drying is required for farmers to get their grain to market. The simplest solution for both farmers and the government is to completely exempt all fuels used in farming operations. This will avoid the need for any relief measures after events like last year’s harvest. Farmers require a legislative and regulatory environment that recognizes our positive contribution towards the climate solution to ensure a sustainable future for this vital industry.

“These costs are adding up and we cannot continue to pay the price for inaction,” added Nielsen. “A complete exemption for all fuels used on the farm is what farmers ultimately require to avoid these crises in the future and provide farmers with the resources to continue doing what we do best.”

**About Grain Growers of Canada**

*GGC provides a strong national voice for over 65,000 active and successful grain, oilseed and pulse producers through its 16 provincial, regional and national grower groups. As a farmer-driven association, GGC advocates for the federal government to take decisions that support the competitiveness and profitability of grain growers across Canada.*

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