

For immediate release

Ontario Grains and Oilseeds submit Risk Management Program today

GUELPH (July 19, 2007)—It's a landmark day for Ontario grain and oilseed farmers, who officially submitted the framework for the proposed Risk Management Program (RMP) to Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Leona Dombrowsky.

The RMP – a price insurance program that has been designed in partnership with Ontario Grains & Oilseeds, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs officials – is a three-year pilot program intended to provide much-needed income stability to Ontario's 25,000 grain and oilseed farmers.

“This is an exciting day because it's the culmination of two and a half years of hard work from Ontario Grain & Oilseed farmers across the province,” says Leo Guilbeault, Chair of Ontario Grains & Oilseeds. “The Minister announced the RMP in early June, and we have spent the last several weeks negotiating details with her staff and representatives from Ontario Federation of Agriculture.”

The RMP is a stable, long-term income-support program based on cost of production and funded partly by farmers through premiums. Payments would be made if the average price of a commodity falls below an agreed support price. This would replace the often inadequate ad-hoc aid announcements that formed the basis of a band-aid approach to income support.

“The RMP proposal is a three-year pilot program beginning in 2007, to help farmers make effective business planning decisions in the next few years,” says Guilbeault. “As the RMP begins its approval process through Cabinet in the coming weeks, we will continue working with the Minister's Office on plans to address the 2005 and 2006 crop years, which were the worst on record for Ontario grain & oilseed producers.”

Grain & oilseed producers – including farm-fed grain users – will have the opportunity to learn details of the proposed framework at producer information meetings beginning July 31 in Eastern Ontario. The meetings are also intended to update farmers on efforts to convince the federal government to support RMP through companion program funding in accordance with the current cost-sharing formulas.

The meetings will take place at the following times and locations: July 31 French translation Finch Community Centre, Finch, Ontario, 7pm; Aug 7 Seaforth Community Centre, Seaforth, Ontario, 7pm; Aug 8 Countryview Golf Course, Chatham, Ontario 7pm.

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