

Federation of Agriculture Responds to Standing Committee Water Presentations

Charlottetown, PE – The PEI Federation of Agriculture responds to recent presentations made to the standing committee on natural resources and environmental sustainability.

“The Federation really appreciates the opportunity for all interested parties to have their say on this important issue,” commented Ron Maynard, President of the PEI Federation of Agriculture “Yet the Federation thinks it is important that a few points be clarified, and topics addressed.”

The current moratorium on deep water wells is not a blanket moratorium, it only prohibits wells for food production (agricultural irrigation). Since the agriculture moratorium was put in place in 2002, there have been over 80 high capacity wells permitted to be installed on PEI and over 35 of these have been for industrial / commercial use.

“Islander farmers are not looking for special treatment, we too value the important resource that water is for our Island,” commented Maynard. “All we are looking for is the opportunity to apply for access to water under the same regulations and monitoring as all other industries and groups including food processing, golf courses and hotels.”

During the standing committee hearings Dr. van den Heuvel provided details on a four-year study of the effects of wells on streams. This research would be in collaboration with water groups, the province and four farm users. This plan includes an open and transparent process to ensure all interested parties are a part of seeing and understanding the data collected.

“As a Federation and industry, we ground our recommendations, regulations and actions in science, this is how we ensure the success of our crops and protect our land and water, vital resources to our industry. Therefore, is it very disheartening to hear groups present and question a researcher’s ethics and the provinces scientific data without any research of their own to back this up,” noted Maynard. “We want responsible water regulations that are grounded in science, protect our environment and support the needs we have as Islanders including the production of food.”

“For the sake of our agriculture community, our rural communities and our local affordable food source, we need to stop singling out our farmers and help them during these times. Because if we don’t, these family farms we say we value, may not be there!” emphasized Maynard.

The Federation of Agriculture is the provinces largest general farm organization in the province, representing over 85% of Island farmers. The Federation exists to help improve the sustainability of Island farms and farm families, providing programming, education and public policy recommendations.