

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PEI Farming Community Denied Disaster Assistance by Federal Government – Province Steps Forward**

**February 9, 2021 Charlottetown:** The PEI farming community greets today’s announcement of \$1 million in disaster relief from the Province of Prince Edward Island for damage to corn, crambe and fruit crops in Post Tropical Storm Dorian with mixed feelings.

While the community is grateful for the Province to come forward, this is a far cry from the initial ask of \$12 million needed to address the disastrous impacts of Dorian on PEI agriculture. Farmers are extremely disappointed in the Federal Liberal Government and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie Claude Bibeau for refusing to join the Province in helping farmers by providing disaster relief through the AgriRecovery program.

AgriRecovery is a national disaster relief program designed to cover “extraordinary costs” suffered by the farming sector in the event of a rare events, such as extreme weather like Post Tropical Storm Dorian.

In September of 2019, Post Tropical Storm Dorian hit Prince Edward Island with wind speeds in excess of 100 km/hr and rain fall in excess of 100 mm in many areas. This storm was deemed a one in one hundred year event and battered and flattened corn and crambe crops, knocked down fruit trees and forced producers to spend extra time and money to harvest what they could or plow down what they could not. These extraordinary costs, in some cases well over \$100,000 on individual farms are now left with producers to shoulder much of the loss.

The PEI Federation of Agriculture led the effort for AgriRecovery assistance that was supported by the effected commodities represented by the Atlantic Grain Council, Dairy Farmers of PEI, PEI Cattle Producers, PEI Hog Marketing Board, PEI Horticultural Association, Fruit Tree Growers Association of PEI and Natures Crops International.

AgriRecovery is only triggered when the Province agrees to submit an application to the Federal Government. After extensive surveys with producers, the PEIFA and the commodity groups brought forward a statement of loss and support needed, and the Province agreed to proceed. In the end, the Federal Government refused to support producers on Prince Edward Island. We are grateful that the Province understood the need to provide assistance.

The farming industry did their level best to convey the relevant issues impacting our farming system as the result of this Storm. The Federal Liberal Government’s refusal to utilize the AgriRecovery program to alleviate the financial cost of a Post Tropical Storm is not just disappointing – it is wrong. It leaves Island Farmers questioning the validity of the program itself. If a Post Tropical Storm does not meet the test, then what does? We encourage all four Liberal Members of Parliament to voice their displeasure loud and clear in Ottawa and ensure our Government finds a way to be better providers of programs designed to provide the necessary supports for our farming community when faced with extraordinary events such as Dorian.

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