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national farmers union
In Union is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hydraulic fracturing a danger to water, food, farmland: NFU calls for moratorium

(Rimbey, Alberta, February 23, 2012) “Many farmers in my area who either have direct experience with the destructive nature of hydro-fracking technology on their water wells, or who have neighbours who have been affected have come to me with their concerns” says Jan Slomp, Rimbey area dairy farmer and Region 7 (Alberta) Coordinator for the National Farmers Union (NFU). “We are in the heart of Alberta’s oil and gas country where our ability to produce good, wholesome food is at risk of being compromised by the widespread, virtually unregulated use of this dangerous process.”

At NFU Region 7’s recent public meeting dozens of concerned farm families heard how their neighbours, the Campbell family from Crestomere, Alberta, had their water well contaminated by highly toxic compounds, which they clearly linked to the fracking of a nearby oil and gas well. Several other attendees then brought forward their stories of losing water wells to fracking near their own farms. “Not many of these stories get made public because the oil and gas companies usually force farmers to sign confidentiality agreements in return for replacement of their water wells” said Slomp.

Iain Aitken, an Alberta cattle rancher and local NFU member observed, “Farmers across Canada largely depend on ground water aquifers for both domestic use and livestock production. The quality of ground water is critical to raising high quality food. Unfortunately in the experience of too many Alberta farmers and ranchers hydraulic fracturing has been associated with water well contamination and damage. That is why our organization is calling for a moratorium on this technique until these problems can be addressed.”

Jan Slomp concluded “The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers have really acknowledged there are problems with fracking by releasing several useful suggestions for guidelines to prevent further problems. However these voluntary guidelines are no substitute for strong regulations enforced by an impartial government body. That is what is needed before we can support any resumption of fracking.”

The NFU represents thousands of family farms across Canada. At its 2011 annual convention members passed a landmark resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing of sub-surface oil and gas formations.

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