



January 23, 2008

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The 11,000 hog producers in Canada are facing their worst financial crisis in 30 years and need immediate help from the federal government. The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) has been working with Minister Gerry Ritz and officials at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada over the last four months to try to find ways to offset what our members have sadly come to call “the perfect storm” – the high Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar, soaring feed costs and low hog prices.

Canada’s hog industry is simply looking for a short-term loan program and improvements to the CAIS (AgriStability) program. Those requests have been so far rebuffed. The industry appreciates efforts by the government to speed up payments within existing programs but this is not enough. This valued-added meat industry is at risk. Farm families in ridings across Canada are affected.

As the request for a short-term loan program and improvements to the CAIS (AgriStability) program have been denied, the liquidity problems for our farmers are getting worse every day.

The pork industry is committed to adapting to the reality of a strong Canadian dollar and high feed prices but cannot do so when the change has happened so rapidly. This industry is world class and has the basic fundamentals to succeed in the future. However, our Canadian Government must also accept its responsibility of providing a stable business environment if it wants value-added businesses to continue adding to the balance of trade.

We ask that you immediately respond to our requests. Rural Canada is at risk. The Conservative Party of Canada promised in its 2006 election campaign that it “should be ready to pitch in when disaster strikes, funding disaster relief separately above and beyond its income stabilization program.” This is a disaster. This is your opportunity. Continued support in rural Canada is vital for this Conservative government.

Please contact me to further discuss this urgent issue.

Regards,

Clare Schlegel  
President, Canadian Pork Council