



CANADIAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DU COMMERCE DES SEMENCES

39 Robertson Road., Suite 302, Ottawa, Ontario K2H 8R2 Telephone (613) 829-9527

Email: csta@cdnseed.org

<http://www.cdnseed.org>

FAX (613)829-3530

March 24, 2006

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
Public Archives Building, 77 Grenville St., 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M5S 1B3

The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
7 Queen's Park Crescent, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y7

Dear Premier McGuinty, Minister Dombrowsky and Minister Duncan,

The Canadian Seed Trade Association serves as the representative organization for 146 agricultural seed companies located in Canada. Approximately 35 of these companies are based in the province of Ontario. Our members are involved in seed research, production and marketing of virtually all agricultural crops. The Canadian seed industry generates almost \$800 million at the farm gate and is responsible for generating over \$650 million to GDP. Private research invests over \$90 million annually in the development of innovative seed technologies and varieties.

It was with great anticipation that I awaited your budget yesterday.
It was with greater disappointment that I analyzed it today.

Governments have asked farmers and the ag industry to be innovative. They have done that. Ontario farmers have quickly accepted and adopted new products, new equipment and new agronomic practices.

Governments have asked farmers and the ag industry to explore and expand marketing opportunities. They have done that. The export of high quality Ontario soybeans into the value added markets of Asia and Europe is one example of recent success stories.

Governments have asked farmers and the ag industry to be better stewards of the land. They have done that. There has been a continuous reduction in the use of synthetic fertilizers and a full 50 percent reduction in the use of pesticides over the last 20 years.

The Ontario farmer and the ag industry have done everything asked of them in order to remain competitive and environmentally responsible at the same time. What the Ontario farmer cannot do is compete against foreign government farm subsidy programs which effectively lower the price of commodities in the market place.

This week when you tabled your budget, you had an opportunity to be a leader – to set an example for the federal and other provincial governments. You had an opportunity to recognize and address the problems that exist in all of rural Canada. You have chosen to not only ignore these problems, but have clearly demonstrated that you either do not understand them, or do not care.

You need to be aware that the financial stress currently being felt by the grain and oilseed sector goes well beyond the farm gate and is having an increasing negative financial impact on rural businesses and communities throughout the province.

There continues to be a need for immediate government action in developing and funding an effective market support program that considers both the short and long-term viability of Ontario farmers. Members of the Ontario grain and oilseed producer associations have developed credible programs that need to be implemented forthwith.

There are numerous, experienced members of the Canadian Seed Trade Association willing to take an active role in facilitating a solution to this critical situation facing Ontario's rural and agri-food economy. You only need to ask.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Cowan', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Cowan
President, Canadian Seed Trade Association
General Manager, Hyland Seeds, Division of Thompsons

cc: Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture & Agri-Food
Canada
David Anderson, Parliamentary Secretary, Canadian Wheat Board
Jacques Gourde, Parliamentary Secretary, Agriculture & Agri-Food
Canada
Brian Wiley, President, Ontario Canola Growers' Association
Larry Vollmershausen, Chair, Ontario Coloured Bean Growers'
Association
Doug Eadie, President, Ontario Corn Producers' Association
Greg Devries, Chair, Ontario Soybean Growers
Peter Tuinema, Chair, Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board
Bob Fotheringham, Chair, Ontario White Bean Producers' Marketing
Board
Tom Hebblethwaite, Chair, Seed Corn Growers of Ontario
Bruce Archibald, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food &
Rural Affairs
Jim Wheeler, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture,
Food & Rural Affairs
Members of the Canadian Seed Trade Association