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Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

5653 Hwy 6 North, RR5 Guelph Ontario N1H 6J2

Voice (519) 837-1620 Fax (519) 824-1835

E-mail: cfomail@christianfarmers.org

Web site: www.christianfarmers.org

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: **CFFO responds to government white paper on water source protection**

Guelph, April 2004. The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario endorses many items found in the provincial government's White Paper on water source protection, but is unimpressed with the timing of the government initiative.

"Our discussions on the merits of the White Paper couldn't mask our irritation regarding the timing," explained John Kikkert, the CFFO's president. "The pollution prevention details of the Nutrient Management Act aren't even settled yet and we are now being called upon to deal with a whole new set of regulations affecting our farmland. Another regulatory burden requiring time and paperwork is unwelcome."

Regarding the White Paper itself, the CFFO is supportive of a number of the initiatives regarding source protection but wants to see a clear government commitment to fund a large portion of the costs associated with implementing improvement plans.

"We want to see provincial legislation include a commitment to provide funds for covering the cost of developing and implementing source water protection plans," said Kikkert. "We believe that at least 90 per cent of the costs should be covered."

The White Paper also contains proposals related to water taking. The CFFO favours the development of thresholds for water taking, with financial charges being levied at certain levels to encourage conservation. Also, the CFFO favours exemptions from charges for drinking water, fire protection and agriculture (up to 50,000 litres per day).

Finally, the White Paper discusses a number of measures related to threat assessment. The CFFO favours using precautionary principles in ranking threats from low to high and wants to see all education and extension costs paid for by the government.

"The CFFO has a long history of supporting stewardship initiatives to enhance our environment and the countryside," said Kikkert. "But in the final analysis we believe that stewardship and pollution prevention will only blossom when a system of environmental payments has been developed. We need to create payments that reward farmers and landowners for the environmental services that their lands provide for the benefit of the public."

For more information on this subject, log on to www.christianfarmers.org.

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For more information, please contact:

John Kikkert

President

(905) 957-7766

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Strategic Policy Advisor

(519) 837-1620