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## **Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

Subject: **Farmers already protect the environment --- let's do more**

Guelph, October 2005. The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario is calling for federal and provincial start-up funding for a program aimed at helping farmers develop alternative environmental uses for their farmland.

"Farmers love the land and have always worked hard at protecting its environmental benefits," said John Kikkert, the CFFO's president. "But it's time for the government to start working alongside farmers in a more proactive fashion so that society can have even greater benefits from these privately-held lands."

Delegates to a recent meeting of the CFFO's Provincial Council quickly adopted the proposal to seek federal and provincial start-up funding. The quick adoption was due to the subject having been widely discussed within the CFFO for several years, both in think tank sessions and in facilitated workshops.

"Society is requesting more and more environmental benefits and services," said Henry Stevens, a CFFO vice-president. "As farmers, we would like to deliver more environmental services than we already are providing. However, achieving these priorities can be costly and farmers can no longer afford to bear the total costs themselves."

The CFFO believes that the best way for farmers and government to achieve greater environmental benefits from farmland is to adopt a model known as Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS). The model is based on farmers voluntarily creating a stewardship plan that is designed to both conserve environmentally sensitive areas and to deliver increased capacity for cleaner water and air, wildlife habitat and an attractive rural environment. A monetary value is established for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services that provide public benefits to society from private land.

"Adopting an ALUS-based model is a much better approach than trying to use government regulation to be more stewardly towards the environment," said Jenny Denhartog, a CFFO vice-president. "ALUS builds on farmer's demonstrated commitment to care for the environment, while being far less bureaucratic and burdensome for all concerned."

While the CFFO believes that start-up funds for ALUS should come from the federal and provincial governments, under the environmental pillar of the Agricultural Policy Framework, the organization believes that medium-term funding needs to be shared between federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

For a detailed copy of the CFFO position statement on ALUS, please visit the CFFO's website at [www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org). You'll find it under a link to Policies and Issues.

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