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Ipsos Reid

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Winnipeg, MB – A new Ipsos Reid poll released this morning indicates that farmers in Canada want a Conservative federal government. The survey shows that a majority of Canadian farmers would vote Conservative (64%). This is nearly identical to the intentions of Canadian farmers prior to the election in 2004, when 60% indicated an intention to vote Conservative.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid Agribusiness, Food and Animal Health Farm Trends poll conducted between December 8th 2005 and January 5th 2006. For the telephone survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 875 Canadian farming households was interviewed. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian farming population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and farm size composition, in terms of annual farm sales, and reflects that of the actual Canadian farming population according to the 2001 Census data.

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This survey suggests that the Conservative Party would receive the support of 64% of decided farm voters in Canada, and the Liberals would be a distant second with 20% of the decided voters' support. Support for the NDP sits at 6% among farmers, with the Bloc Quebecois slightly ahead at 7% nationally (46% in Quebec). The Green Party gathers support from 3% of farm voters and 1% would vote for some "other" party. One in eight farmers overall (13%) are undecided or would not vote if an election were held tomorrow.

- The Conservatives would receive the strongest support from Alberta (87% of decided voters), followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba (73% and 71%, respectively). Two-thirds of farmers in Ontario would vote Conservative (66%) .
- Conservative support is lowest in Quebec (12%), where farmers support the Bloc Quebecois (46%) by a nearly four to one margin. The Liberals are a distant second in Quebec with the support of 28% of decided farm voters, 16 points ahead of the Conservatives.
- The farm vote is strongly Liberal in the Atlantic Provinces (58% of decided voters), with the Conservatives a distant second (36%) , while in British Columbia, the farm vote is virtually split between the Conservatives at 47% and the Liberals at 43%.
- Support for the Green Party is strongest in Manitoba, where they capture 6% of decided farm voters. The Greens receive the support of 3% of voters in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan and 4% in the Atlantic Provinces.

Farmers intend to vote along traditional patterns. When compared to the voting intentions of farmers prior to the June 2004 federal election, it becomes clear that farmers have not really changed their minds regarding who they want to see in power on an overall basis, but that there have been some dramatic shifts regionally. Overall, the Conservatives are up four points from where farmer voting intentions were prior to the 2004 federal election and the Liberals are down 3 points. Support for the NDP is down one point and support for the Bloc is up 1 point (up 2 points in Quebec).

Real differences can be seen when looking at how farmer voting intentions have changed regionally. In Alberta, the Liberals have lost a lot of ground directly to the Conservatives. The Liberals are down 10 points while the Conservatives have gained 10 points. A similar shift has also occurred in Saskatchewan, where the Conservatives are up 10 points and the Liberals are down 4 points. The NDP have also lost 4 points in Saskatchewan. In Ontario, farmer intentions to vote Conservative have also increased 10 points since 2004, while the Liberals are down 6 points and the NDP are down 4 points.

Opposite shifts are apparent in British Columbia and the Atlantic Provinces. In BC, the Conservatives are down 16 points compared to voting intentions prior to the 2004 federal election and the NDP are down 5 points, while the Liberals are up 23 points. The Conservatives are down 10 points in the Atlantic Provinces and the NDP are down 6 points, with the Liberals gaining 14 points.

Farmers in Quebec continue to support the Bloc Quebecois, which have gained 2 points when compared to intentions prior to the 2004 election. Intentions to vote Liberal are up 1 point. The Conservatives have not fared well with Quebec farmers, losing 10 points since intentions prior to the 2004 federal election. The real gainer in Quebec is the NDP, with a 10 point gain among decided farm voters since the 2004 election.

Farm voter intentions are relatively unchanged in Manitoba since prior to the 2004 federal election. The Conservatives have gained 1 point, the Liberals are down 2 points, and the NDP are down 3 points. The Green Party has made some excellent progress in Manitoba, up 5 points among decided farm voters.

Thinking of how you feel right now, if a FEDERAL election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you, yourself, be most likely to support?									
		Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	Atl.
Base: Decided Voters (Leaners included)	Current	n=760	n=92	n=120	n=119	n=89	n=136	n=123	n=81
	2004	n=847	n=85	n=180	n=162	n=90	n=165	n=79	n=86
The Conservatives	Current	64%	47%	87%	73%	71%	66%	12%	36%
	2004	60%	63%	77%	63%	72%	56%	22%	46%
The Liberals	Current	20%	43%	5%	12%	19%	29%	28%	58%
	2004	23%	20%	15%	16%	21%	35%	27%	44%
The NDP	Current	6%	6%	4%	9%	3%	2%	11%	2%
	2004	7%	11%	6%	13%	6%	6%	1%	8%
The Bloc Quebecois	Current	7%	-	-	-	-	-	46%	-
	2004	6%	-	-	-	-	-	44%	-
The Green Party	Current	3%	3%	3%	3%	6%	2%	2%	4%
	2004	2%	6%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Other	Current	2%	1%	1%	3%	-	1%	1%	-
	2004	2%	1%	1%	5%	-	1%	4%	-

Farm Economics Are Top Issues for Canadian Farmers: Low Commodity Prices, the Cost of Farm Inputs, Trade Barriers and Income Support Are What Canada's Leaders Need to Address...

Farm economics are top-of-mind for farmers when considering the agriculture issues for Canada's leaders to address. The number one issues facing the agriculture industry today that farmers feel should be addressed are low commodity prices and the price of farm inputs, mentioned by 39% of farmers, each. A quarter of farmers feel that low commodity prices are the top concern to be addressed while 14% feel the top issue is the price of farm inputs. Trade barriers and policies are the top issue for one in eight farmers (12%) and are mentioned as a top-of-mind issue for a quarter of farmers (24%). Government support and income stabilization is a top-of-mind issue for one in six farmers (16%).

When examined by voting intentions, there are some significant differences in the issues farmers feel need to be addressed.

- Farmers intending to vote for the Conservatives are twice as likely to mention low commodity prices and the price of farm inputs as their top issues (45% each) than they are to mention trade barriers (23%), the next closest top-of-mind issue.
- Farmers intending to vote for the Liberals also hold low commodity prices as the top issue (36%), but put trade barriers (30%) ahead of the price of farm inputs (26%).
- Farmers intending to vote for the NDP appear to give more equal weight to several issues, with the price of farm inputs in the lead (34%), followed by low commodity prices (29%), government support and income stabilization (26%) and trade barriers (24%).

- Farmers intending to vote for the Bloc Quebecois put environmental issues forward as their top concern (27%), closely followed by trade barriers (25%), and then government support and income stabilization (21%) and the price of farm inputs (20%).

Thinking of the issues presently facing the agriculture industry in Canada, which one issue do you feel should receive the greatest attention from Canada's leaders? What other issues do you think are important to the agriculture industry in Canada right now?						
	Conserv- ative	Liberal	NDP	Bloc Quebecois	Green	Other
Base: Decided Voters	n=429	n=196	n=41	n=61	n=27	n=6
Low commodity prices	45%	36%	29%	18%	29%	34%
The prices of farm inputs	45%	26%	34%	20%	51%	22%
Trade barriers	23%	30%	24%	25%	26%	67%
Government support/ Income stabilization	15%	14%	26%	21%	13%	47%
Environmental issues	7%	9%	15%	27%	2%	-
Base: Decided Voters (Leaners Included)						

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