

## **Martin Sides with Farmers on Long-Standing Grievance**

Rail competition; better use of science in agriculture; and better access to venture capital for farmers are some solutions

OTTAWA, May 9 /CNW/ - Liberal leadership candidate Paul Martin is promising a series of measures to renew Canada's ailing farming sector, including introducing rail competition and making better use of science in agriculture.

The Honorable Member of Parliament for LaSalle-Emard is also committed - if elected prime minister - to looking at the idea of providing better access to capital for the expansion of value-added agri-business, such as the production of ethanol.

"We need to show real support, and real respect, for our farmers and their families, to show our appreciation for the burden they carry in contributing to Canada's growth and wealth," says Mr. Martin.

"A new policy framework is certainly required to help transform Canada's rural economy into a more durable, less vulnerable and more prosperous foundation," he says.

Mr. Martin says the introduction of rail competition is what's needed to help struggling farmers cope with unreasonable freight costs.

"There is no reason, if you pay a fee, why two railways can not operate down the same track," he says.

He is also advocating investing more in agricultural science, which would particularly help in the growing sector of pulse crops (ie. lentils).

"We, as a government, have to realize that science in agriculture is just as important as anywhere else," said Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin also advocates the ideas put forward by Dr. Red Williams, who has been a long-time advisor to Mr. Martin on agricultural issues.

Dr. Williams, considered one of the country's foremost visionaries on ideas for improving agriculture, has suggested, among other things, a venture capital fund devoted specifically to agricultural development.

"There is a critical need for access to capital in order to develop value-added agricultural industries," Mr. Martin said. "I think a number of things Dr. Williams has put forth we need to take a look at, and we will."

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