

Prairie flooding weighing on farmers business confidence: survey

BY NEIL SCOTT AND JAMES WOOD, REGINA LEADER-POST AND SASKATOON STARPHOENIX JULY 7, 2010

REGINA — Business confidence among farmers and others involved in agriculture in Canada is falling, according to a survey released Wednesday by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

The results, based on a survey of members of the CFIB, indicated that the "barometer" of business confidence among those involved in agriculture had dropped to 51 in June, from 54.9 in May.

The level of confidence for those in agriculture was well below the national average of 66.4 score for all businesses that participated in the survey.

Marilyn Braun-Pollon, vice-president for agriculture with the CFIB, said the results of the survey highlight the need for action at a federal-provincial meeting of agriculture ministers taking place in Saskatoon this week.

"Farmers are looking for results," Braun-Pollon said.

"It's time for action, a wait-and-see approach is a non-starter," she added.

Prairie farmers are in particular rough shape lately following exceptionally wet weather that has caused flooding and disrupted seeding.

"Given the extensive flooding, it's not surprising," Braun-Pollon said of the CFIB results.

Meanwhile, country's largest farm organization says the agriculture ministers meeting this week in Saskatoon must ensure that government support programs are able to respond to the disastrously wet conditions on the Prairies.

Canadian Federation of Agriculture president Ron Bonnett added that governments and industry must take long-term steps to restore the industry to profitability.

"I think the message coming out from a lot of these producer groups there was let's put out some of these urgent fires so that we can deal with some of the broader issues, and the issue of the flooding in the West was one of the ones that came forward front and centre when we were talking about getting programs to respond properly," said Bonnett.

In the longer-term, the CFA wants to see the development of a national food strategy.

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