

To Whom It May Concern:

It's clear from Ottawa's decision to shut down prison farms that neither the Harper government nor Correctional Service appreciates the value of these programs. What's even more disturbing is that they have no understanding of the cost implications.

The claim that the six existing prison farms lose \$4-million a year is unsubstantiated. It's a number pulled out of a hat.

Incarcerating inmates in federal institutions is a costly business. You would think that any rehabilitation program that actually *saved* taxpayers' hard-earned dollars would be celebrated. Yet, that's precisely what prison farm programs do.

The produce, beef, pork, poultry, eggs, milk and grains raised by the inmate farmers feeds the entire local prison populations. Food products now provided by the farm program would need to be purchased if the program ends. Anyone who's been in a grocery store recently knows that food prices are rising. Why hasn't CSC included this cost in its one-sided 'guesstimates'?

We like to see our hard-earned tax dollars spent effectively. The prison farm program does just that. Mark my words. Canadians, both as consumers and taxpayers, will end up paying the real price of abandoning prison farm programs.