

To Whom It May Concern:

Please consider the following for publication as a letter to the editor:

Putting an end to 125 years of prison farm programs raises a number of vital issues.

Canadians, increasingly cynical about the motives of our politicians, want evidence of thoughtful planning for the future, not short-term ad hoc decisions based on cash grabs and partisan agendas.

Dismantling federal prison farm programs fails this test. A hasty and ill-considered move, it's the result of a dictate from the Harper government to cut spending regardless of the public interest. And it ignores the greater social price to be paid by gutting the farm programs that make up a miniscule per cent of Correctional Service Canada's annual expenditures.

CSC claims the move is part of some master plan. But they refuse to share this plan with employees, the Union or the public.

If this was a carefully-considered policy decision, why does CSC admit they have yet to figure out replacement rehabilitation and training programs for the inmates currently in its farm programs?

Neither the Harper government nor Correctional Service Canada can offer a sound rationale for eliminating prison farm programs.

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