



## WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

A strong voice for a vibrant, market responsive barley industry in western Canada

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### For Immediate Release

#### WBGA APPLAUDS MINISTER RITZ'S PLAN FOR PRODUCER, INDUSTRY, AND CWB BARLEY MEETING

**January 17, 2008, Airdrie, AB:** "Today's call by Minister Ritz to invite CWB Chairman Ken Ritter and CEO Greg Arason to Ottawa to sit down and come to a resolution with barley farmers, our industry partners and themselves is a giant step forward in this current impasse" says Jeff Nielsen president of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA).

"Clearly our government is listening to producers and the need to move barley forward to which we make the decisions on who, what, where and when we can sell our own barley". "The CashPlus malt barley program recently announced by the CWB did not fulfill the needs of the producers, our malters or even our grain trade" continues Nielsen. "We cannot wait any longer for a solution to this refusal of the CWB to do what farmers voted for and what even their own internal surveys have shown is needed."

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan account for 85% + of the total barley production in western Canada and 90% of the malt barley selected. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan governments along with the government of British Columbia support the call for barley producers to be able to market their barley how ever they choose.

Alberta alone has over a million acres of high quality barley that the CWB can not attract as these producers do not have permit books. This has frustrated not only our domestic maltsters but our grain trade that sees excellent malt barley yet cannot handle it. In the limited consultations the CWB had with select producers, on the CashPlus plan, it did provide them the controlled - desired results that the CWB wanted. It is doubtful the CWB consulted with those producers that do not take out permit books, or the 62% of barley producers that voted for choice.

With an open fully transparent barley marketing system, pricing signals and marketing options will encourage and build a grower – end user relationship, with no middle man needed. This in its self will encourage growth in barley research and development. Growing the ability of barley farmers to ensure the quality barley our industry partners' need, our vibrant livestock feeding sector and grow in new areas such as, food fractionation and ethanol, that can increase returns to the producer.

"We need to know that we are going to be able to market our barley freely for the new crop year now" states Doug McBain, WBGA past president. "The CWB is holding our grain trade and domestic maltster's hostage by not allowing them to have their customers sign contracts with them for next falls barley crop. By doing this, the CWB is financially hurting every barley farmer in western Canada, as these industry partners are loosing sales, thereby farmers are losing any potential gain on these sales."

"Farmers are looking at other crops rather than barley, crops that are showing high farm gate returns for next fall; all we ask is that we get that chance with barley as well." concludes Nielsen.

WBGA thanks Minister Ritz and our government for their commitment to choice. As stated in last fall's Throne speech, **"Our government will recognize the views of farmers, as expressed in the recent plebiscite on barley, by enacting marketing choice"**.

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