



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

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For Immediate Release -- News Release

Western Barley Growers Association Ready to go to Work

February 9, 2006 - Airdrie, AB.: The Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) congratulates Honourable Chuck Strahl (Chilliwack/Fraser Canyon) on his appointment as Agriculture Minister. We would also congratulate Jacques Gourde (Lotbinere-Chutes de la Chaudiere) and David Anderson (Swift Current/Grasslands) as Parliament Secretaries to Honourable Strahl. "This definitely shows a very high level of commitment by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to name three MP's to the Agriculture portfolio" said Doug McBain, President of the WBGA.

"Honourable Strahl literally stepped out of Rideau Hall and hit the ground running" states McBain, referring to the announcement of the \$755 million payment to grain and oilseed producers announced the day after the swearing in. The conservatives increased the spring portion of the payment to nearly 80% from the original 50%. This will help in the short term. "We see a tremendous opportunity to move agriculture policy in a direction that will make Canadian agriculture primary profitable again" remarked McBain.

Jailed farmer and WBGA Director Rick Strankman met with David Anderson in his Ottawa office. "This will be a great team for agriculture" says Strankman. "We are anxiously looking forward to working with Mr. Strahl, Mr. Gourde and with Mr. Anderson on agriculture policy and on the Conservative commitment to end the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) monopoly", says an up beat Strankman.

"I am just looking forward to the day when prairie farmers can sell their grain and not be put in jail by the CWB, ever again," says Strankman.

"We would like to see the government move on the CWB monopoly in a timely yet responsible manor" says Strankman, "just as farmers are expected to do". "There are lots of options open to the Minister to allow market choice to farmers that are within the existing Act" adds Strankman.

When asked by Mr. Strankman about his appointment as a Parliamentary Secretary to Agriculture Minister Strahl, Mr. Anderson stated that "I was honoured to accept the position and recognize that it is a huge responsibility to be on the Conservative Agriculture team".

The WBGA are working continuously on a number of agriculture issues that affect prairie barley producers including CAISP, Kyoto, On-Farm Food Safety, Crop Insurance and Business Risk Management. "We are very excited to be able to work with Honourable Strahl and the agriculture team" concludes McBain.

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