



News Release

For Immediate Release

WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION and WESTERN CANADIAN WHEAT GROWERS ASSOCIATION JOINT-CONVENTION IS A HUGE SUCCESS AND REAFFIRMS DIRECTION AND MANDATE

Airdrie, AB., February 21, 2005 – "This convention was very informative. We had industry leaders and experts discussing the leading topics in agriculture today" commented Doug McBain, President, Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) on their first-ever joint- convention held in Canmore, AB. February 16, 17 and 18.

Speakers at the convention discussed topics which ranged from bio-tech crops, grain transportation and handling, value adding opportunities and barriers, innovation, producer cars and issues involving the monopoly of Canadian Wheat Board (CWB).

"We heard that growth in our malting and brewing industry in Canada is being hampered by the restriction imposed on western Canada by the CWB. Investment in value adding industries in western Canada will not occur as long as the CWB monopoly exists, both farmers and industry need more flexibility," said McBain.

Bruce Webster, Chairman of the Ontario Wheat Producers Marketing Board (OWPMB) was on hand to talk about the success of allowing farmers market choices by removing restrictions. Mr. Webster told delegates the OWPMB cost to farmers is \$1.50 per tonne, use of the pooling option remains as a very viable option, and the board has very successfully operated without assets. Mr. Webster also relayed to the convention that since the changes the OWPMB made to the monopoly on wheat sales, farmers no longer pay for commercial storage - a savings of some \$8 million annually and there has been a positive affect on plantings with acres planted to wheat in Ontario remaining at previous levels and frequently above.

"The experience of the OWPMB clearly demonstrates a pooling option can co-exist along side an open market. The benefits are evident when compared to the monopoly of the CWB in western Canada, our acres planted to wheat continue to decline yearly and we continue to pay some \$80 million in commercial storage payments. The claim by the CWB that it would cease to exist the monopoly was removed is clearly false, making fundamental changes to how the OWPMB operated has made it a more viable option for farmers - the same could happen here" outlined McBain.

"The resolutions passed by WBGA and WCWGA members at the joint-convention reaffirmed strong support for the policy direction we have followed and provided for solutions" said Doug McBain, when commenting on resolutions discussed.

The executive of the Western Barley Growers Association was re-elected. Douglas McBain of Cremona, AB., President, Jeff Nielsen of Olds, AB., Vice President, Rick Strankman of Altario, AB., Treasurer, Art Walde of Kindersley, SK., Saskatchewan Vice President, Doug Robertson of Carstairs, AB., Alberta Vice President, and Albert Wagner, Stony Plain, AB remains as Past President.

Tom Hewson of Langbank, SK was elected as a Director and Wendy Wecker of Olds, AB and Ed Persely, Bonnyville, AB came on as an Advisors to the board.

For more information contact:

Douglas McBain, President
Cremona, AB Phone/Fax: (403)
637-3880
dmc bain@therockies.ca

Jeff Nielsen, Vice President
Olds, AB
Phone: (403) 556-3035 Fax:
(403) 556-5978
jeffniel@telusplanet.net

Albert Wagner, Past President
Stony Plain, AB
Phone: (780) 963-7753 Fax:
(780) 963-8753
ajwccr@telusplanet.net