



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

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For immediate release

BARLEY MARKETING UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES

February 27, 2008 - Airdrie, AB: Members of the Western Barley Growers Association, (WBGA) are greatly disappointed that yesterday in Winnipeg the Court of Appeal denied overturning last summer's lower court ruling which rejected barley freedom on August 1st. WBGA members also saw the Court of Appeal deny its intervention arguments on a constitutional challenge of the CWB Act. WBGA would like to thank the ten barley producers that allowed their names to stand in our efforts for intervention.

"Today's ruling does nothing to promote and grow barley production in western Canada" says Jeff Nielsen, President WBGA. "Our Canadian malting industry is in a serious position. It cannot attract barley acres to fulfill its needs unless they are able to show true market signals and price transparency. Without removing barley from the CWB's monopoly completely, we will see fewer acres seeded to barley, and less malt barley production. I call upon Canadian Agriculture Minister Ritz, and our Government of Canada to introduce legislative reforms immediately".

"Removing barley through legislation now, will allow barley itself to be a crop of choice, providing solid net returns to producers; not one seeded as a commodity of last resort and of low return. This will allow more growth in malt production in Canada, growth in jobs in Canada, and growth in barley research and development in Canada. This growth in barley, once it is completely removed from the CWB Act, will be a catalyst towards building stronger economic returns right from the producer in western Canada to the brewery worker in Montreal. Without growth in the Canadian barley sector, we will see economic losses to those value added sectors that rely on, what once was our supply of top quality barley for their needs, namely our maltsters and brewers; and without a constant quality supply of feed barley, shackle our already struggling livestock feeding sector. Saying that, I encourage those that have fought hard against barley freedom, to work with us now in promoting the necessary legislative reforms" concludes Nielsen.

"Going to legislative reforms, and introducing them as soon as possible, is a priority, as we need to see these changes done in time for the new crop year August 1st" states Tom Hewson, WBGA Vice President. "We need the support of the opposition parties to acknowledge the fact that without the ability to see dramatic growth in barley now, we do risk serious economic harm to all of Canada".

"Barley farmers have spoken, we want barley freedom, freedom where we can market our own barley, just as we do our canola, pulses, flax and oats," comments Doug McBain, WBGA Past President. "How can members of the Opposition parties deny my personal rights to sell my own barley?"

WBGA is calling on farmers that want marketing freedom from across western Canada to meet at the steps of the Saskatchewan Legislature in Regina, on Friday February 29th at 12.30 PM. We will be hosting a rally to show the Government of Canada the support they have for introducing the necessary legislative reforms now.

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