



## WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

Agriculture Centre – 909 Irricana Road

Airdrie, AB T4A 2G6

Phone: (403) 912-3998

Fax: (403) 948-2069 (Airdrie office)

[www.wbga.org](http://www.wbga.org) Email: [wbga@wbga.org](mailto:wbga@wbga.org)

**For Immediate Release -- News Release**

### **Canadian Wheat Board – Draining prairie farmers' pockets**

**April 4, 2006 - Airdrie, AB.:** “Recent PRO’s released by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) reflect more of a drain on producer’s pocket book while a strong rally in wheat prices were seen in the US due to drought in the winter wheat producing states” comments Jeff Nielsen, President of the Western Barley Growers Association. “Wheat and durum will go unsold this year due to the board’s inability to make adequate sales, forcing cash strapped farmers to carry grain into the next crop year at an even lower PRO,” continues Nielsen.

Barley markets are falling as well. Malt prices have been falling for the past five years. Since 2002/03 we have seen a decrease of \$79 tonne for two row and \$67 a tonne for six row varieties.

Along with the lower returns producers are facing, the CWB continues to increase their spending: using farmers’ money for full page advertisements in most of Canada’s daily papers wanting our negotiators to not seek an aggressive WTO trade agreement. Further, the CWB is using farmer’s money to keep lobbyists in Ottawa when they have their own federal Minister responsible for them. Renovating CWB’s head office at a cost to producers of more than 10 million dollars is coming out of our pool accounts as well!” outlines Nielsen. The WBGA is asking Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister responsible for the CWB to halt all CWB spending of producer’s money unless it is for direct marketing costs. Farmers now more than ever need to seek accountability for the CWB’s expenditures.

“What happened to the statutory obligation of the CWB to market all grain offered to it by producers?” asks Nielsen. “Our only choice is to contract grain to the CWB, and the CWB is legally obligated to take delivery and market that grain. The CWB is directly responsible for a large part of the prairie farmers income crisis”. stated Nielsen. “Farmers receive less than the cost of production from the CWB. Government cash injections serve to cover up CWB marketing incompetence, maintaining farmers in a beggar cast,” lamented Nielsen.

The WBGA calls upon Minister Strahl and the Conservative government to follow through on their commitment to prairie farmers to allow marketing choice as soon as possible. “We call upon the government to implement market choice by August 1, 2006. This will allow produces to make the most of their grain production.” states Nielsen.

For further information contact:

Jeff Nielsen, President  
Olds, AB  
Phone: (403) 556-3035 Fax: (403) 556-5978  
[jeffniel@platinum.ca](mailto:jeffniel@platinum.ca)

Douglas McBain, Past President  
Cremona, AB  
Phone/Fax: (403) 637-3880  
[dmcbain@wbga.org](mailto:dmcbain@wbga.org)