



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 (WBGA) returns to Geneva to lobby WTO negotiators as part of Team Alberta – Geneva 2006

April 20, 2006 -- Airdrie, Alberta: The Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) will be returning to Geneva to lobby WTO negotiators for lower tariffs, improved market access and the elimination of export subsidies April 25-30. President Jeff Nielsen and Past President Doug McBain will be joined by "teammates" Mike Leslie, General Manager - Alberta Barley Commission; Jurgen Preugschas, Chairman - Alberta Pork Producers; and Darcy Davis, Chairman - Alberta Beef Producers; Dale Soetaert, Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission and Chris Moran, Executive Director of Grain Growers of Canada.

"It is critical that pro trade groups, our livestock sector and commodity groups that depend on exports continually push for a trade agreement that includes real tariff reductions and allows real increases in market access", says Jeff Nielsen. Farmers' livelihoods depend on a comprehensive end to the Doha round of negotiations. WTO country Ministers have committed to achieving an agreement at the end of this year. While it is likely that their commitment to reach full modalities by the end of this month will not be achieved, we are very hopeful that comprehensive new rules will be agreed before the end of July. Our new government needs to give our highly respected team of negotiators strong direction to complete their task. We see their commitment to give grain farmer's "choice" to market their grains as a key to help Canada achieve goals at the negotiations.

We all know the figures; over 90% of Canada's agriculture depends on or receives market signals from international trade. Western Canada's agricultural base is in dire need of revitalization. We can see that happen, can see the value it will add to our economy, and we can see the value added it will bring to our wheat, barley, canola, pulses and livestock sectors. We as producers see this as reality if we achieve at WTO total reduction of subsidies and unfair tariff restrictions.

"We will be doing our part by lobbying hard for an aggressive package of cuts in tariffs, domestic subsidies, and export subsidies", continued Doug McBain, Past President, WBGA.

"A Trade Deal that results in meaningful reduction of restrictive and distorting tariffs is absolutely critical to Canada's grains, oilseeds, pulses and livestock sector", noted Jeff Nielsen. Government and other members of the WTO need to see that there is support for an aggressive trade deal from Canadian farmers. We are the ones with the vested interest in trade negotiations and ultimately, the final trade deals" continued Nielsen. "Not only my farm, but all farms in Canada, will be directly effected for many years by decisions made in the upcoming months in Geneva", concluded Nielsen.

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