

WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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Western Barley Growers Association's (WBGA) Vision at the Doha Round of WTO

April 22, 2005 -- Geneva, Switzerland: "A new liberalized Trade Deal is critical for western barley growers" states Association President Doug McBain, an Alberta grains and forage producer. Current progress has been slowed by a dispute among the self-proclaimed Top Five Countries (US, EU, Brazil, India and Australia). EU balked at the methods of calculating ad valorem equivalents (or A.V.E.'s), noted McBain. "Our Canadian negotiators have their work cut out for them to keep the talks progressing. We must get substantive market access if this round is to be successfully concluded by December, 2005, and implemented 12 months later."

"We are doing our part by lobbying hard for an aggressive package of cuts in tariffs, domestic subsidies, export subsidies", continued McBain."

"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 WBGA Vice President. "But we must evolve from the past 'raw commodity sales mentality' to 'value addition' if we are to compete with the big Treasuries of the US and EU or the aggressive raw commodity production of new kids on the export stage like Brazil and India", Nielsen continued.

"It is absolutely critical to develop the grains and oilseed value-adding industries in Canada. We need to increase the use of G&O products at home if we are going to survive let alone compete in world markets", emphasized Nielsen.

Speaking at the WTO Talks being held today in Geneva, McBain and Nielsen noted that in order to open the markets of the world to trade in value added products, we have much homework to do back home; we need regulatory and institutional reform. Canada is blessed with the water, energy and raw products - the key ingredients in competitive food production. We have these three but are currently no where near achieving our potential in transforming into a supplier of high value food products.

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Western Barley Growers Association

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