



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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News Release

DESIGN OF CWB ANNUAL SURVEY OF FARMERS IS FLAWED

Airdrie, AB. – June 30, 2009: The Canadian Wheat Board annual survey of farmers has the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) concerned.

"The survey is one of the main tools used for strategic planning by the CWB Board of Directors" says Brian Otto, President of the WBGA. "Unfortunately the design of the survey is flawed."

First, the CWB only surveys CWB Permit Book holders. "The CWB doesn't get the views of farmers who grow wheat and barley but do not have a CWB permit book", says Otto. "Our view is that their opinion matters too."

Second, the survey of 1300 farms across the Prairies does not take production into account. Alberta farmers, who produce 35% of the wheat and barley on the Prairies, represent only 27% of the survey.

"Let's be clear", says Otto. "If all farmers – both with and without Permit Books - were given a voice in proportion to provincial production, those favouring an open market in barley would be more than the 60% shown by the current survey."

Third, the survey favours smaller and older farmers nearing retirement rather than farmers who are producing the bulk of the wheat and barley grown on the Prairies.

"The CWB is hearing primarily from their supporters. Taking volume of production by province into account and including farmers without Permit Books would go a long way to improving the information being gathered", Otto says. "If the CWB wants farmers' views to assist in future business decisions, they need to change the survey. Adjustments can be made to the process without losing information concerning historical trends."

"We support the CWB's use of farmer surveys to gauge how farmers view various issues. But to be relevant, the survey needs to be inclusive, not exclusive. Forming strategic plans without the benefit of all farmer stakeholders will generate skewed results. This is not in the best interests of the CWB nor the farmers it represents.

As it is right now, the survey shows CWB Permit Book holders' views only, and does not represent all Western Canadian farmers."

Western Barley Growers Association is a strong voice for a vibrant, market responsive barley industry in western Canada.

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