



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

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WBGA Calls for Immediate Action to Allow Barley Producers Access to New Markets

August 21, 2007 – Airdrie, AB.: "Barley is being harvested now in the southern parts of western Canada and yet the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is offering us pennies for our hard work" states Jeff Nielsen, President of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA). With the expectation of barley freedom August 1, producers who traditionally didn't grow barley planted substantial acres as they saw it as an opportunity to cash in on rising international feed and malt markets. Prices continue to rise as Australia and Europe struggle with weather concerns.

"With the overturn of the governments plan to implement barley freedom from the monopoly of the CWB, producers now face pricing that may not even cover cost of production" exclaims Buck Spencer, Past President, and Lethbridge area producer. "I have seen new crop barley piles that could be in excess of tens of thousands of bushels. This barley was grown under the expectation of barley freedom. We need the new Minister of Agriculture and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Minister Ritz to move fast and provide the freedom producers need now so we can achieve a piece of the prices we can see out there for barley".

One of the simplest steps the CWB can take itself is to issue no buy back export licences for producers and industry players. WBGA along with the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, presented this proposal to Prime Minister Harper with a copy to Minister Ritz. "Eastern Canadian producers can sell their grains to whoever they choose, we are asking for harmonization between east and west" expresses Nielsen. "By giving producers and our grain industry partners this opportunity it will allow some freedom and is a step in the right direction which would dramatically improve the creditability of the CWB".

"The initial payments and the Pool Return Outlook (PRO's) are extremely disappointing compared to what we saw in the market place prior to August 1. International markets continue to rise, and yet the CWB has failed to provide barley producers a chance to get at those markets. With the issuance of fixed price contracts the CWB makes a mockery of producers' ability to market their own grain. These contracts do nothing in the way of allowing producers to market their non-board crops or the opportunity to extract the best possible net return to their farms" continues Nielsen. "If we do not see changes soon our malting industry will be hit hard again by not being able to attract the barley supplies it needs. Producers are not pleased and will look at any opportunity to market their barley out side of the CWB"

Western Canadian farmers have spoken. They want choice. They have stated that in a plebiscite that was clear and concise, as well as in the CWB producer surveys the past 10 years. Those that suggest progressive farmers don't know how to understand marketing or choices either in a plebiscite or the real world put today's farmer back 100 years. WBGA calls on Minister Ritz to move now to call upon the CWB and work together to allow barley producers complete choice. We also call on Minister Groeneveld in Alberta to work with it's producers who soundly voted for choice and instruct the CWB and the federal government to accept facts and move forward.

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