



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

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For Immediate Release

WBGA PLEASED AAFC TO SIGN ON TO UPOV'91

Airdrie, Alberta – November 18, 2013 - The Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) was pleased to hear Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Gerry Ritz's commitment last week that the government will sign onto the UPOV'91 Convention by August 1, 2014. "We are presently signed onto the UPOV'78 Convention which our current Plant Breeders Rights Act is based on," says Doug Robertson, President of the WBGA. "Some farmers believe that under our present Act that they have the legal right to save and use their own seed they grow on the farm (so-called Farm Saved Seed or FSS). This is actually not true. Only by adopting UPOV'91 will this right to FSS be enshrined in International Law."

The additional advantage of adopting UPOV'91 will be the creation of a more attractive investment climate for plant breeders. "We have been told by private plant breeders that they are not interested in risking the millions of dollars it costs to bring a variety to market in Canada without a more modern legal framework in Plant Breeders Rights," continues Robertson. "Most of the rest of the world has already adopted UPOV'91, and it has given plant breeders assured options and ways for them to recover the costs of developing their technology they bring to market. Companies do not have that same assurance here in Canada because we are still operating under the old 1978 UPOV Convention. Seed companies have choices where to focus their breeding efforts, and right now it isn't Canada".

"The changes announced by the Government to the legislation which will allow the adoption of UPOV'91 and bring Canada in step with the rest of the world, and will encourage investment in better varieties for farmers", concludes Martin Hall, Vice-President of WBGA. "We applaud the federal government for their vision and drive to create a modern grain industry in Canada."

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

For further comment, please contact:

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