



## WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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

Agriculture Centre – 97 East Lake Ramp NE

Airdrie, AB T4A 0C3

Phone: (403) 912-3998

[www.wbga.org](http://www.wbga.org) Email: [wbga@wbga.org](mailto:wbga@wbga.org)

### For Immediate Release

## WBGA CHALLENGES FEDERAL OPPOSITION PARTIES AS TO WHY THEY WISH TO DENY PRAIRIE BARLEY PRODUCERS CHOICE

**December 6, 2007 – Airdrie, AB:** In recent press releases, Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe have stated that along with their respective members of parliament would vote against any possible legislative reforms that the Conservative government might introduce on barley within the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

“One has to really question the motivation of these three parties, who want to deny barley producers the right to choose how they market their barley, especially when the majority of farmers have already voted for choice” states Jeff Nielsen, president of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA). “By fighting our government and the wishes of western barley farmers, producers continue to see below average returns for both feed and malt barley when compared to US and international markets. The Liberals, New Democratic Party and the Bloc Quebecois are trying to preserve the status quo of the CWB. Along with select CWB directors and management, they are forcing farmers to deal with an outdated agency. One that refuses to adapt, change and transform into something that might actually provide value to western Canadian farmers”.

Last week the Malting Industry Association of Canada (MIAC) called on the Government of Canada to go forward and introduce legislative reforms removing barley from the CWB Act. With this, Canada’s malting industry would be able contract and deal directly with barley producers ensuring the quality and quantity of barley they need. Pricing options and transparency back to producers will allow greater net returns to producers.

“This is a clear signal that changes to how we market barley is needed now not later” says Doug McBain, past president. “We encourage Minister Ritz to look at all the possibilities to remove barley from the CWB Act, even if that means legislative reforms. The opposition parties have no right to vote against something when they have only a few Members of Parliament representing them in rural ridings within the designated area of western Canada”.

“With the recent election of the Saskatchewan Party in Saskatchewan and their strong support of marketing choice, close to 100 % of malt barley production, and over 90% of total barley production is in provinces where producers and their provincial governments clearly support changes to the way we are able to market our barley” concludes Nielsen.

In the recent Throne Speech it was stated ***“Our Government will recognize the views of farmers, as expressed in the recent plebiscite on barley, by enacting marketing choice”***. WBGA continues to support and encourage Prime Minister Harper and Minister Ritz to reach this goal.

Western Canadian farmers can manage their business risks in the marketing of canola, pulses, oats and flax. Information on lack of price transparency and masking of market signals by the CWB were documented in a report released in 2006 titled, ***“Market Signals in the Canadian Barley Sector”***. This report outlines the challenges producers and industry face with barley and outlines a series of solutions. A link to this report can be found at [www.wbga.org](http://www.wbga.org)

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For more information contact:

Jeff Nielsen  
President ~ WBGA  
Olds, AB  
Cell: 403.556.0408  
[jeffniel@platinum.ca](mailto:jeffniel@platinum.ca)