



## **WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

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**For Immediate Release -- News Release**

### **Substantial ambition reduced in final WTO Declaration**

**December 21, 2005 - Airdrie, AB:** "Trade dependant agriculture, as exists in western Canada, received little benefit or consideration in the final declaration from the Hong Kong WTO meetings " said Doug McBain, President of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA).

The declaration issued Sunday, December 18, removed text agreed to on Saturday, December 17, which proposed to reduce the powers of state trading enterprises (STE) and address the market access issues around supply managed sectors of agriculture.

"Because negotiators were unable to agree on a formula to increase market access and reduce domestic support, the farmers who depend on exports were sidelined and gained very little" commented McBain.

"Canada offered up protection of STEs and supply management, while demanding other countries open their markets to us - this was a very brave move by our ministers and they should be commended for it", but when the EU and the US refused to move we pulled it off the table suggested McBain. While this has denied Canadian farmers any benefit it will more serious for the poorest of the poor farmers in the least developed countries.

"Tariffs and domestic subsidies by countries around the world cost Canadian farmers \$2.5 billion annually, under this agreement we will continue to carry this burden. Canadian farmers will be further shut out of the market as countries sign by-lateral agreements and under this process most of our products could end up competing on price alone" said McBain.

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**Western Barley Growers Association**

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