



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 Email: wbga@wbga.org

For Immediate Release

WBGA PLEASED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT: TABLING OF THE *CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL GROWTH ACT* WILL HELP UPGRADE CANADA'S PLANT BREEDING

Airdrie, Alberta, December 10, 2013 - The Western Barley Growers (WBGA) was very pleased to hear the announcement today by Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz of the tabling of the *Canadian Agricultural Growth Act*. The Bill will modernize nine older Acts, and adopt and implement the UPOV 91 Convention. "This ratification will help upgrade Canada's Plant Breeding system to that of our major competitors, who ratified the UPOV 91 convention some years ago," says WBGA President Doug Robertson. "The move is a necessary step in attracting investment in Cereal Plant Breeding to Canada."

Canada has been operating under the UPOV 78 convention, which restricted how Plant Breeders Rights were applied in Canada. This discouraged private companies from investing in breeding programs in Canada.

"Another plus for farmers is that not only do we get access to more cereal varieties in the future, but the farmers' right to use his own seed for production, called Farm Saved Seed, is permitted under UPOV 91", continues Robertson. "Most farmers believed that UPOV 78 allowed them to save their own seed for replanting, but there was no provision in the convention for that. UPOV 91 allows countries to enshrine that right to Farm Saved Seed. This adoption will help to modernize our Plant Breeders Rights legislation in Canada, and better compete with the rest of the world in Cereal production."

The New Act also modernizes Feed, Fertilizer, Seeds and Health of Animals Acts, allowing for the latest scientific data and research from international sources to support Canadian studies. "This change will reduce red tape and administration costs to better align us with our customers," says Martin Hall, Vice President of the WBGA. "The proposed Bill also streamlines the Advance Payments system for farmers, allowing us to have longer-term advances, up to 5 years, and makes repayment easier."

"This Bill is good news for farmers", concludes Robertson. "It encompasses many changes that farmers have been asking for, and will help modernize our grains and regulatory system. It will help create an environment that fosters innovation which our farmers need."

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

For further comment, please contact:

Doug Robertson
President - WBGA
403-337-2077