

MEDIA RELEASE

Wheat Growers Welcome Agricultural Committee's Recommendation

June 11, 2002: "We are very happy to see that Members of Parliament are listening carefully to what farmers want and we commend them on their thoughtfulness and foresight," said Wheat Grower President, Art Enns.

Enns was responding to the report tabled today in the House of Commons by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food recommending that "the CWB Board of Directors implement a trial open market for wheat and barley."

"This is exactly what farmers have been asking for in poll after poll," said Enns. "No matter how you phrase the question, about two-thirds of farmers always clearly indicate that they want an end to the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly and want the sale of their wheat and barley to the Board to be voluntary."

Wheat Grower Vice President Bernie Sambrook, who chairs the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) Marketing Committee, pointed out that the Committee's recommendation is fully consistent with suggestions that the GGC has been putting forward to government. "Our member organizations have been considering proposals to allow farmers to market a percentage of their grain outside the CWB's marketing channels and have had discussions with MPs about it," said Sambrook.

"There is every reason to move forward with this recommendation," said Enns. "First of all, it must be seen as part of a process that goes back to the early 1970's when the feed grain market was deregulated. That step and this represent a natural progression in grain policy to give farmers more marketing options."

Sambrook also pointed out that implementing the recommendation would relieve a major trade irritant with the United States and, at the same time, would harmonize grain marketing policies across Canada.

Note: The Wheat Growers have written to Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief and Wheat Board Minister Ralph Goodale asking that the recommendation be implemented without delay. A copy of the letter is attached. To view the Standing Committee Report, go to www.parl.gc.ca. Click on "Committee Business", then "House of Commons Committee List", then "Agriculture and Agri-Food", and then to "List of Reports." The recommendation is #14 in Report 5.