

MEDIA RELEASE

**Wheat Growers Bring Trade Concerns to Top Officials**

**May 6, 2002:** Past President Ted Menzies represented the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association at trade meetings in Ottawa on Friday, May 3. The Wheat Growers were part of a small group of representatives from the agriculture sector invited to a breakfast meeting at Ambassador Paul Cellucci's home with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman.

"The U.S. farm bill dominated our discussions," says Menzies. "We all presented a similar message that this bill was unbelievable, coming from a country that is portraying itself as a leader in advocating tighter trade rules and discipline during the WTO agriculture negotiations."

Menzies adds that the group also expressed grave concerns about the new country of origin labelling requirement and inclusion of pulses in the farm bill.

"I suggested to the Secretary that farmers in the U.S. had learned how to work the programs to their advantage and that markets will be very seriously affected as farmers switch to non-traditional crops such as field peas, to take advantage of the best payment options," says Menzies.

Menzies also attended the International Policy Council - Agri Food and Trade workshop, which included representatives from around the world from both developed and developing nations.

"After Secretary Veneman's luncheon address, the delegates took turns condemning the new farm bill and raised the strong possibility of trade action or challenges at the WTO," says Menzies. "Obviously we are not alone in our frustration with the direction the U.S. farm bill has taken."

Menzies joined representatives from the Grain Growers of Canada in a later meeting with Lyle Vanclief to discuss the farm bill and the Trade Injury Compensation Program (TICP) developed by the GGC.

"The Minister, while not endorsing the TICP proposal yet, is at least starting to think about some kind of bridge funding to help Canadian farmers offset the destructive consequences of American farm policies that encourage overproduction," says Menzies. "I had the opportunity to remind the Minister that the Canadian government had set the precedent by coming to the defense of Bombardier when it was disadvantaged by a foreign subsidy."

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