



NEWS RELEASE

Strong Support for Wheat Grower Reorganization

July 21, 2003 -- A renewal committee of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA) says the organization will continue to represent the interests of prairie grain farmers who prefer an open and commercially responsive market environment.

The committee of voluntary members, elected at a special meeting on June 19 in Regina, has established a work plan to review and recommend a new format for the producer organization. The former board of the WCWGA resigned effective June 30, 2003 and the new committee assumed responsibility for reorganization and future management.

Discussions since the Regina meeting have confirmed a strong desire and an important need for this segment of grain growers to be represented in public decision making.

“The prospect of losing the Wheat Growers Association has caused many farmers to realize the negative consequences of a one-sided policy debate,” explains committee co-chairperson Cherilyn Jolly. “It is especially important for young farmers like me to have a voice and become involved.”

Members say there are many issues that underscore the need for the Associations work to continue. For example, food safety and environmental issues are foreshadowing new legislation, which needs grain producer input. “And the very real prospect of a deficit in CWB pool accounts in the same year when prices reached their highest levels in six years points to a fundamental malfunctioning of our marketing regime. Western Canada experienced its lowest crop production in over 20 years yet farmers were unable to access markets, and in some cases are facing a large carry out at the end of the crop year,” says committee co-chairperson Paul Orsak. “The system is clearly failing us.”

The committee has canvassed former executives of the WCWGA, the general membership, as well as knowledgeable industry, government, and academic individuals. There has been an overwhelming response that without a WCWGA-like organization, the majority of commercial wheat and grain growers on the prairies will not be represented in important public policy decisions.

The committee will contact all current WCWGA members immediately to notify them of the intent to reorganize and continue the organization’s contribution to prairie agriculture. Wheat grower representation will be maintained on all government, agency and industry committees. The renewal committee will present its recommendations to the membership in the new year.

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association had its origins as the Palliser Wheat Growers Association during the difficult days of grain surpluses and excess regulation of the prairie grain industry during 1968-72. It has consistently advocated less regulation and more market-responsive agricultural policy for prairie grain growers, and empowerment of producers in their own decision making.

Members of the WCWGA renewal committee are:

Bob Anderson, Dugald Mb.	Wm. Cooper, Foam Lake Sk.
Hubert Esquirol, Meota Sk.	Curtis Hiebert, Sperling Mb.
Brad Hanmer, Govan Sk.	Cherilyn Jolly, Mossbank Sk.
Alanna Koch, Edenwold Sk.	Clayton Kotylak, Montmartre Sk
Keith Lewis, Wawota Sk.	Al Loyns, Winnipeg Mb.
Ted Menzies, Claresholm Ab.	Wally Nelson, Avonlea Sk.
Paul Orsak, Binscarth Mb.	Bernie Sambrook, Medora Mb.
Curtis Sims, MacGregor Mb.	

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