



Canadian grain leaders surprised and alarmed after Day One in Geneva

April 20, 2005, Geneva Switzerland ...

A delegation of western Canadian farm leaders arrived Monday in Geneva to make the case for an aggressive stance re agriculture trade liberalization during World Trade Organization (WTO) talks this week.

“We were surprised and alarmed to find that Canada is “on the outside looking in” instead of driving the agenda,” remarked Randy Hoback, SK farmer and Chair of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers. “Canada is the third largest exporter of agriculture and food products, and the fifth largest importer. We used to be in the Top Four or Quad Group of Negotiators and now we’re not! Where is Canada?” Hoback queried.

Eugene Dextrase, Chairman Alberta Grains Commission, noted “ I am alarmed to hear that New Zealand and Australia, two Members of the pro- free trade Cairns Group, are questioning our commitment to freer trade. They wonder about Canada’s credibility.”

Doug Robertson, Chair of Alberta Barley Commission, noted the Americans and Europeans are saying that Canada is protecting the status quo. “Everywhere we go, we hear Canadian negotiators are hamstrung by having to protect certain products.”

Jeff Nielsen, Vice-President of the Western Barley Growers, was pleased to note that the Barley Growers, Barley and Grain Commissions, as well as the Wheat Growers, had all signed on today with the initiative spearheaded by the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance. CAFTA today announced the launch of the Global Alliance for Liberalized Trade in Food and Agriculture (GALTFA). “We pride ourselves as four of the 39 founding organizations (from 15 countries on 5 continents) which will aggressively promote freer trade.

According to Grain Growers of Canada numbers Canada’s grain farmers are losing \$1.3 billion annually at the hands of European and American subsidies. Tariff protection adds to losses by reducing market opportunities.

The Geneva Delegation includes representatives from the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Western Barley Growers Association, and Alberta’s Barley Commission & Grain Commission. The group grows wheat, barley, canola, peas, oats – all of which are plagued by distorting subsidies and punitive tariffs.

Media inquires may be directed to:

In Geneva: 011- 44- 7834 865 730 (temporary no.)

In Canada: returning April 27, 2005.

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