



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers See Some Positives in CWB Election Panel Report

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association is pleased to see the CWB Election Review Panel has recommended a number of proposals put forward by the Wheat Growers to improve the CWB election process.

“While the recommendations fall somewhat short of our wish list, they will go some distance to improving the integrity of the election process,” says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers.

A key recommendation is to change the voter eligibility requirement to ensure only “actual producers” who deliver at least 40 tonnes of grain to the CWB in either of the last two crop years are eligible to vote.

“The Wheat Growers would have preferred a weighted ballot based on grain production, but the implementation of a minimum threshold and the naming of the actual producer as the eligible voter will help clean up the voters list,” says Jolly-Nagel. “The current system is open to too much abuse.”

Under the current election rules, a large number of eligible voters have little or no direct economic stake in the production and marketing of grain. In each of the previous three crop years, more than 40% of those who would be eligible to vote have delivered less than 33.5 tonnes of grain to the CWB. While the Wheat Growers realize some of these 40,000 eligible voters may be bona fide farmers, it’s quite likely that many of them do not depend on grain farming for their livelihood.

The Wheat Growers were also pleased to see the Panel make the following recommendations, which were in line with Wheat Grower proposals:

- ! The re-balancing of election districts so that the variation in the number of eligible voters can be no more than 15%. In the 2004 election, the number of eligible voters in district 10 were 38% fewer than in district 6.
- ! The appointment of an Independent Election Commissioner. The Panel recommended the Commissioner be appointed by the CWB, however to be truly independent of the CWB, the Wheat Growers maintain the Commissioner must be appointed by the federal government.
- ! Maintenance of current candidate and third party spending limits.
- ! Strengthening of the CWB Election Period Code of Conduct, so that it lessens the ability of the CWB to influence the outcome of the election.
- ! Changing the timing of the election to the January to March timeframe.

The Wheat Growers will be seeking to ensure these and other recommendations are adopted by the federal government following the federal election.

The WCWGA, an independent producer organization, has spent 35 years bringing forth innovative farmer-driven solutions and will continue to lobby on behalf of forward thinking, progressive producers in an effort to make farming sustainable and profitable.

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To arrange a media interview with Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel
(who is in Hong Kong attending the WTO Ministerial conference), please contact:

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Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.