



*For Immediate Release*

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## **Wheat Growers Disappointed With Outcome of WTO Talks**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers are disappointed with the lack of progress made at the WTO negotiations in Hong Kong this past week.

“Very little ground has been gained,” says Cheryl Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “Western Canadian farmers who depend on exports will continue to bear the brunt of a highly distorted global marketplace.”

The talks ended with no improvements in market access for Canadian agricultural exports, and no reductions in production distorting domestic subsidies provided by the European Union and the United States.

The only positive element of the negotiations is that agreement has been reached to completely eliminate export subsidies and to impose greater disciplines on trade-distorting food aid and export credit programs, but even here the end date is 2013, which is far longer than was necessary.

“It’s disappointing that we did not see a more aggressive timeline here,” says Jolly-Nagel. “We are convinced the Europeans would have agreed to a faster timeline on the elimination of export subsidies if Canada was prepared to give ground on the CWB monopoly.”

“Once again the interests of western farmers has been sacrificed to protect the CWB and its monopoly,” continues Jolly-Nagel. “The Canadian government missed an opportunity to wring valuable concessions in exchange for something that provides little or no value to western Canadian farmers.”

The WTO declaration calls for further negotiations to be concluded by April 30, 2006. The Wheat Growers will continue to push for a deal that better serves the needs of Western farmers. In the final day of negotiations, the Wheat Growers were alarmed to see the Canadian government take a position that undermined efforts to improve market access for Canadian agricultural exports.

“In these negotiations, the federal government failed to serve the interests of the vast majority of western Canadian farmers,” says Randy Hoback, Chair of the Wheat Growers. “We want to see our money come from the marketplace, but until meaningful progress is achieved at these negotiations and the market distortions are removed, the Wheat Growers will have little choice but to call on the federal government to provide annual trade compensation payments to prairie farmers.”

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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***Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.***