



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers and Barley Growers Seek Answers From Key Industry Players

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA) challenged top executives of some of Canada's major grain organizations yesterday on the opening day of its 35th Annual Convention, held jointly with the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) in Canmore, Alberta.

Delegates heard Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) President and CEO Adrian Measner talk about the significant marketing challenges the Board faces this year. He also spoke about the CWB's new daily price contract and branding opportunities for Canadian wheat. Farmers questioned Measner on the Board's recent decision to ship wheat from the ports of Churchill, Baie-Comeau and Thunder Bay to meet sales contracts at the Port of Vancouver.

"I don't think most farmers were satisfied with the explanation the CWB provided," says WCWGA President Cherilyn Jolly. "Of course we understand the need to meet sales commitments, but there has to be cheaper options than shipping grain backwards all across the country."

Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) Chief Commissioner Chris Hamblin discussed the many downgrading factors in the 2004 harvest. She also spoke about the CGC's view that the industry needs to retain KVD as the cornerstone of Canada's grain grading system. The Wheat Growers and Barley Growers responded with a joint resolution calling for changes in Canada's grading and marketing system to allow for grain to be purchased from farmers on the basis of its quality attributes, as opposed to its visual characteristics.

"KVD imposes too many restrictions on our ability to develop and market varieties that both farmers and our customers need," says Jolly. "We need to move beyond a rigid visually-based grading system to one which is responsive to the quality traits that end-users are seeking."

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool CEO Mayo Schmidt gave the keynote address last night saying we need to restore the profitability of wheat. "Instead of it being a crop most farmers use to get rotation, we want to make wheat win." Schmidt stressed the global competitiveness of Canadian wheat will depend on greater research, improved market access, lower worldwide subsidies and a focus on product innovation.

The joint convention of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and Western Barley Growers continues until Friday.

The WBGA is farm organization voluntarily funded by a membership made up of farmers, industry and end users. It provides a leadership role in supporting the value-added industry in Canada and abroad. The WCWGA is an independent producer organization, with a 35-year history of bringing forth innovative, farmer-driven solutions. The association lobbies on behalf of forward thinking, progressive producers in an effort to make farming sustainable and profitable.

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To arrange media interviews with Cherilyn Jolly at the convention,
please contact Priya Batchelor at (403) 861-1256.