



*For Immediate Release*

*June 20, 2005*

## **Wheat Growers Look Forward to CWB Election Review**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association looks forward to participating in the review of Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) director election rules, as announced by the federal government on Friday.

“We are pleased the federal government has responded to our calls for a review of the CWB election rules,” says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “The occurrence of missing ballots and the low voter turnout in the last election suggest improvements are badly needed.”

In the latest election, held in 2004, only 33% of eligible voters bothered to cast a ballot, down from 43% in the 2002 election. The 2004 election was also marred by voter list irregularities.

The Wheat Growers will be seeking a weighted ballot to better reflect each farmer’s economic interest in wheat and barley marketing. At our annual convention in February, Wheat Grower members passed a resolution calling on changes in the election rules that would “give farmers voting rights in proportion to their stake in the Board marketing system.” The Wheat Growers will also consider making recommendations on voter eligibility criteria and other election rules.

While the Wheat Growers are pleased with the election review, the Association is disappointed the review does not go further, especially in light of WTO negotiations which contemplate major changes for state trading enterprises such as the CWB. The Wheat Growers note for example, that in the framework agreement reached last July, WTO members have already agreed to eliminate government-backed financial guarantees for all state trading enterprises. “Now would have been a good time to undertake a thorough review of the CWB, including its financial structure, governance and mandate,” says Jolly-Nagel.

The Wheat Growers note the last comprehensive review of the CWB’s mandate was undertaken by the federal government in 1996. In contrast, the Australian government undertakes a full review of its state marketing agency every five years.

“Nevertheless, we look forward to this review and will continue to push for marketing choice, so that western farmers can benefit from the same freedoms now enjoyed by Ontario and Quebec farmers,” concludes Jolly-Nagel.

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.

For further information, please contact:

Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President, WCWGA  
Tel: (306) 354-2517

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