



For Immediate Release

September 21, 2005

Wheat Growers Push for Falling Number Grading

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers is seeking regulatory changes in western Canada that would allow wheat deliveries to be graded on the basis of falling number, a key indicator of milling quality in sprout-damaged grain.

“It looks like there will be a significant amount of sprout-damaged wheat again this year,” says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “The industry needs to make sure a system is in place that allows farmers to get full value for our grain.”

At the Western Grain Standards Committee in April, the Canadian Wheat Board put forward a proposal to have falling number grading introduced on a voluntary basis. That proposal was not accepted by the Committee, and so wheat continues to be graded solely on the basis of sprout count. Grading on the basis of sprout count means that wheat of acceptable milling quality is sometimes unnecessarily downgraded, resulting in significant income losses for farmers. For example, a farmer who has 1000 tonnes of sprout-damaged wheat could lose over \$45,000 if his wheat is graded feed quality on a visual sprout-count basis, when it might grade #3 CWRS milling quality on a falling number basis.

The Wheat Growers note that European and U.S. buyers routinely buy wheat from farmers on the basis of falling number.

“If these other countries have overcome the technical, economic and regulatory barriers, we are confident the Canadian industry can do so as well”, says Jolly-Nagel. “We support the CWB’s proposal, however if that proposal needs to be modified to gain acceptance by the industry and the Commission, then let’s get on with it.”

The Wheat Growers recognize some grain companies have concerns about the reliability of the testing equipment. “We respect those concerns,” says Jolly-Nagel “and that’s why we argue that falling number grading should only be introduced on a voluntary basis.”

“We agree that no grain company should be required to grade wheat on the basis of falling number,” continues Jolly-Nagel. “However, those companies who are willing to invest in the technology and who are confident in their ability to manage the risks, should not face a regulatory barrier that prevents them from competing for increased business from farmers. Let the marketplace decide.”

The Wheat Growers have written to the Canadian Grain Commission urging it to ensure falling number is introduced as an optional grading factor as soon as possible, and certainly no later than Western Grain Standards Committee meeting in November.

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.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:
Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President
Phone: (306) 354-2517 or Cell: (306) 354-7368

Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.