



*For Immediate Release*

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### **CWB Misspends Farmer's Money**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association strongly objects to the court action launched yesterday by the Canadian Wheat Board in which it is attempting to overturn a government directive. On October 5, the federal government issued an order instructing the CWB to stop spending money to promote its monopoly.

"This institution is betraying the trust of farmers," says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. "It is once again spending our money to score political points rather than concentrating on getting the best price for our grain."

The Wheat Growers note the CWB's court application will do absolutely nothing to increase the sale of grain or improve returns to farmers. The legal costs incurred will be paid by captive farmers. Moreover, a ruling in favour of the CWB would give it license to spend even more money on self-promotion, rather than dedicating its resources to maximizing returns to farmers.

"The CWB is now misspending farmers' money in an effort to gain the right to misspend even more of our money," says Jolly-Nagel. "What does it hope to accomplish? Even if the CWB wins, farmers lose."

As a monopoly seller, the CWB has a duty to ensure it only incurs costs that relate to the selling of grain. The CWB itself seems to recognize this role by claiming at the bottom of every one of its press releases that it returns "all" sales revenue, less marketing costs to Prairie farmers. The Wheat Growers note, however, that to finance this legal action, the CWB will either have to dip into the CWB pool accounts or draw funds from forward pricing programs. In either case, this is money that would otherwise go to farmers.

"The CWB directors should not be using our money as their own personal slush fund," says Jolly-Nagel. "If certain directors want to engage in political theatre then they should spend their own nickel and stop reaching into the pockets of other farmers."

The Wheat Growers argue that the potential for misuse of farmers' money is one of the key reasons prairie farmers need marketing choice. Under a marketing choice environment, individual farmers would no longer be captive to the monopoly and would not be forced to fund political views they do not support.

The Wheat Growers note the CWB is claiming the government directive infringes on the CWB's freedom of expression under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Wheat Growers maintain that such an argument might hold some weight IF farmers were free to disassociate themselves from the CWB. However, until farmers gain marketing choice, they have no such freedom.

"What the CWB fails to recognize is that spending my money to advocate a position I disagree with violates my freedom of expression," says Jolly-Nagel. "Individuals should be free to express their opinion, but an institution that holds Canadian citizens captive should not. That said, the CWB should be free to express its views as soon as farmers are free to take our business elsewhere."

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