



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers Call on Federal Government to Hold CWB Accountable

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association is calling on the federal government to hold the Canadian Wheat Board accountable for violating the government directive of October 5 and for improper conduct during the CWB director election campaign.

“The CWB has violated its own election rules and continues politicking in direct defiance of the government order,” says Cheryl Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “As long as the CWB has a monopoly, it has no business engaging in any sort of political activities.”

In a letter to Minister Strahl, the Wheat Growers cite a number of examples where the CWB has ignored its own election period code of conduct and violated the federal government order of October 5. The government order prohibited the CWB from engaging in activities that advocated the retention of its monopoly powers. Examples of recent CWB transgressions include:

- Hosting a meeting in CWB district 3 during the director election campaign in which farm groups in support of the CWB monopoly were allowed to present their views to members of Hutterite Colonies.
- Issuance of a press release on November 15 in which the CWB boasted about transportation savings it had earned in the previous crop year. The Wheat Growers brought the matter to the attention of the election co-ordinator who also recognized the impropriety of the release and formally asked the CWB to defer issuing any further press releases that might be construed as an attempt to influence voters.
- A speech given by the CEO of the CWB to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce in October which brazenly promoted the value of the monopoly to the City of Winnipeg and the Port of Churchill.
- The CWB’s promotion of its monopoly on its website, including a prominent link on its homepage that refers visitors to articles and commentaries that tout the supposed benefits of the single desk.

In a press release dated October 11, the CWB claims it follows a “strict code of conduct which prohibits our influencing the elections in any way”. Jolly-Nagel says “It’s now clear that this statement was simply empty rhetoric and the CWB never had any intention of complying with its own prescribed rules.”

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While CWB executives appear free to flout the law the Wheat Growers note the federal government does not show the same degree of latitude toward farmers. In the past, the Canadian government has not hesitated to prosecute and imprison western Canadian farmers for the “crime” of selling their own wheat and barley.

“Why the double standard?” asks Jolly-Nagel. “Why are prairie farmers thrown in jail when the CWB and its executives are allowed to ignore the law with impunity?”

The Wheat Growers have asked the federal government to hold the CWB accountable for its actions or alternatively, provide an indication of when western Canadian farmers will be allowed to directly sell our wheat and barley to a buyer of our choice without fear of arrest or prosecution.

For further comment, please contact:

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