



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers Support Progress Toward a Voluntary CWB

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food yesterday to emphasize the importance of bringing marketing choice to prairie wheat and barley growers.

“We are excited about the opportunities that marketing choice will bring,” said Cheryl Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “Not only will it lead to higher farmgate returns, but we are convinced it will help spur greater investment in wheat and barley research, and will lead to much greater processing of wheat and barley on the prairies, as is now the case for canola, oats and special crops.”

At the Committee hearings, Jolly-Nagel, rejected any call for a producer plebiscite on the Canadian Wheat Board’s marketing mandate.

“Prairie farmers should enjoy the same property rights that other Canadians take for granted,” said Jolly-Nagel. “Decisions over the sale of grain should not be decided by majority rule. Quite simply, the Wheat Growers believe decisions over the disposition of private property are best left in the hands of the individual who owns the property.”

“The Wheat Growers fully respect those farmers who want to market their grain on a co-operative basis,” continued Jolly-Nagel. “We are convinced that a voluntary Canadian Wheat Board can operate effectively in a market choice environment, providing it has directors and employees who are determined to make it work.”

In its presentation, the Wheat Growers noted how the CWB pricing options are currently failing to capture the rally in world wheat prices. Farmgate returns on the CWB’s fixed price contracts this year have been well below U.S. market values. Prices offered to prairie farmers at Canadian elevators under the CWB’s fixed price contracts are currently \$1.00 per bushel below northern U.S. elevator prices for winter wheat, about \$0.50 below for hard red spring wheat and \$0.70 below for durum wheat. Projected returns for the CWB pool accounts are not any better, even with the increases announced in yesterday’s Pool Return Outlooks.

“We’re not asking you to take our word for it” Jolly-Nagel said to Committee members, “but rather we encourage the Committee to investigate these price differences for yourselves.”

The Wheat Growers also called on the Committee to ensure the Canadian Wheat Board was subject to provisions of the Accountability Act and the Access to Information Act. On Wednesday the Canadian Senate voted to remove the CWB from scrutiny under this legislation.

“We urge members of this Committee to make sure yesterday’s decision by the Senate is overturned so that farmers and Parliamentarians have greater ability to hold the Wheat Board accountable for its actions.”

The WCWGA, an independent producer organization, has spent 36 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.

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Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.