



*For Immediate Release*

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### **A Great Step Forward for Prairie Agriculture**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association eagerly anticipates a new era of profitability in growing, marketing and processing barley following the federal government's decision to implement marketing choice for western Canadian barley growers on August 1, 2007.

"This is an extremely positive development for prairie farmers and the western agricultural economy," enthuses Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. "The federal government has announced to the world that we're now 'open for business' in barley."

With the change in policy, prairie farmers will soon be able to access world barley prices on a year-round basis. In the current crop year, farmgate returns for feedgrains and malt quality barley have been held down by the inability of farmers to capture full market values under the CWB monopoly.

In addition to higher profit opportunities, the Wheat Growers are convinced the policy change will trigger greater investment in the development of new barley varieties and will encourage more barley processing on the prairies.

"We've seen the canola and oat industry flourish under an open market in Canada, and we believe the same vibrant entrepreneurial culture will soon be in store for barley and wheat," says Jolly-Nagel.

The federal government's announcement comes following the release of the barley plebiscite results. The results show that 62% of barley growers want change, with 48% voting for marketing choice and 14% voting to eliminate the CWB's role in barley marketing.

The Wheat Growers applaud the federal government for finally honouring its election commitment to provide prairie farmers with marketing choice on barley and now urge the government to follow through on its commitment on wheat.

"This is the start of a new era of prosperity in prairie agriculture," says Jolly-Nagel. "The next piece of the puzzle is for the federal government to move forward in providing choice in wheat marketing."

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