



For Immediate Release

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CWB Barley Scheme Falls Well Short of the Mark

While dressed up as a cash price option, the Canadian Wheat Board's latest barley marketing scheme, dubbed *CashPlus*, won't satisfy the needs of farmers who want the ability to contract directly to processors for full market value, says the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association.

"The CWB is saying its cash prices under this program will reflect market values, but as we've seen on the wheat side, its cash pricing options don't come anywhere close to reflecting world values," says Jolly-Nagel. "Why should farmers believe this program will be any different?"

The CWB's program doesn't give farmers the ability to cash or forward price their barley with domestic maltsters or exporters at full market values.

"Prairie farmers will continue to miss out on good malt barley marketing opportunities," says Stephen Vandervalk, Alberta Vice President of the Wheat Growers. "All we're going to see is an arbitrary price, not a true market price."

The Wheat Growers are seeking marketing freedom in which farmers would have the ability to sell their grain to the CWB or a buyer of their choice. The Wheat Growers continue to call on the federal government to introduce legislation to provide western farmers with the same marketing freedom now enjoyed by Ontario farmers.

"The present marketing system is not allowing us to take full advantage of strong market prices," says Jolly-Nagel. "Barley growers in Australia and Montana are reaping the rewards of direct market access while Canadian farmers face yet another year of comparatively low returns through the CWB."

The Wheat Growers believe processing of malt barley on the prairies would grow substantially under a free market. Currently, the industry is constrained by its inability to secure supplies through the CWB's centrally-planned marketing system. Freeing up the domestic market would allow farmers to contract directly with maltsters at higher prices and under better terms than we're seeing now.

"The majority of farmers, the malting industry, and grain companies are united in their call for a deregulation of the barley market," says Jolly-Nagel. "If the CWB isn't going to provide marketing flexibility on its own, then the federal government needs to get cracking and take decisive action."

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