



For Immediate Release

June 20, 2008

Wheat Growers Appalled by Outrageous Court Decision

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association is astounded by a federal court ruling released today that allows the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), a creature of government, to actively campaign in the political debate over its monopoly.

“This is an outrageous decision,” says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “If allowed to stand, it means the CWB can take my money and use it to lobby against me.”

The decision by Justice Hughes fails to take into account the compulsory nature of the CWB. Parliament of Canada has conferred extensive regulatory powers to the CWB that prevent prairie farmers from selling their wheat and barley to a buyer of their choice. This means that western farmers who grow food quality wheat and barley have little choice but to deliver their grain to the CWB, and pay for all costs it incurs.

The Wheat Growers also question how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms could permit a judge to give greater freedom of expression to a government-created institution than to the citizens forced to operate under it.

“How can the Charter possibly allow a government institution to champion the political views of one group of farmers over another” says Mike Bast, Chair of the Wheat Growers. “The majority of farmers want marketing freedom and yet the CWB will be allowed to use their funds against them.”

The Wheat Growers note the ruling opens the door for the CWB to make donations to political parties, as it has done so in the past. The Wheat Growers believe Canadian citizens, including prairie farmers, should not be compelled to contribute to political parties or causes they do not support.

The Wheat Growers vigorously defend the right of any individual farmer, citizen, private business or voluntary farm organization to take a position on the CWB monopoly or any other matter of public policy.

“If the Court ruling is allowed to stand, it means my money can be used, without my consent, to express and promote a political view that I strongly disagree with,” says Jolly-Nagel. “This represents a gross violation of MY freedom of expression.”

The Wheat Growers strongly urge the federal government to appeal this egregious Court decision.

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