



*For Immediate Release*

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## **Wheat Growers Applaud Rail Service Benchmarks Contained in CTA Decision**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association is pleased the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) has established precedent-setting benchmarks for railway performance relating to the fulfillment of railcar orders from grain shippers.

The Wheat Growers are commenting on the CTA decision, released yesterday, in which the Agency found that CN Rail had failed to meet its level of service obligations to four grain companies during the 2007-08 crop year.

“The minimum performance benchmarks established by the CTA will be important in ensuring all shippers receive an acceptable level of railway service,” says Con Johnson, Director of the Wheat Growers and chair of its Transportation committee.

In its ruling, the CTA determined that railways must fulfill at least 80% of all grain company rail orders and that 90% of these orders must be filled on time (i.e. in the “want” week or in the subsequent two week period).

While the CTA ruling only applies to the four shippers, the Wheat Growers believe the precedent-setting case will help ensure all shippers receive an adequate level of service. The CTA ruling suggests that any shipper who is not being provided service at the benchmark levels will be able to apply to the CTA for relief.

“These performance standards will give grain companies the ability to better manage their shipments and inventories to meet sales programs,” says Mike Bast, Chair of the Wheat Growers. “The greater predictability of grain movement will allow companies to accept deliveries from farmers on a more timely and reliable basis.”

The Wheat Growers recognize the benchmarks established by the CTA may or may not be optimal, and will be looking to the federal government’s level of service review, now underway, to determine whether these benchmarks are appropriate or need refining. Other measures, such as reciprocal rewards and penalties for railcar spotting, loading and unload performance should also be considered by the review as a means to improve the overall functioning of the grain handling and transportation system.

For further comment, please contact:

Con Johnson  
Director  
(306) 293-2902

Mike Bast  
Chair  
(204) 330-0053

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