



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers seek marketing freedom in wake of Supreme Court decision

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association urges the Canadian government to move forward quickly in providing prairie farmers with greater marketing freedom, following yesterday's announcement by the Supreme Court of Canada that it will not be hearing the Canadian Wheat Board's appeal of a lower court ruling.

In June 2009, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld a government order directing the CWB to not spend money promoting its monopoly. In a unanimous decision, the appeal court judges ruled that the federal government has the power "to direct the Wheat Board with respect to the full range of activity conducted by the Wheat Board."

Now that the CWB has exhausted all appeals, the Wheat Growers urge the federal government to use its authority to direct the CWB on a number of operational matters including the issuance of orders that:

- Direct the CWB to provide export licenses to all prairie wheat and barley producers on the same terms and conditions, regardless of their method of production. Currently, the CWB board of directors gives preferential buyback rates to organic grain producers and discriminates against those farmers who produce wheat and barley in a conventional manner.
- Increase and expand the processor exemption. In 2006, the CWB board of directors authorized an exemption from the CWB monopoly to niche prairie grain processors by allowing them to purchase up to 500 tonnes of wheat and barley direct from prairie farmers. The Wheat Growers would like to see this amount progressively increased and expanded to include all processors.
- Instruct the CWB to provide no-cost export licenses for any contracted grain that it refuses to accept. In the 2008/09 crop year, the CWB accepted only 74% of durum wheat contracted by prairie producers, refusing to accept the remainder. In the current crop year, the CWB is expected to accept even less of the durum wheat offered.
- Instruct the CWB to provide export licenses to prairie producers on the same terms and conditions as now offered to wheat and barley producers in the rest of Canada. Currently, the CWB provides no cost export licenses to farmers in Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada and all of British Columbia except the Peace River district. Farmers in the prairie region who wish to export their wheat and barley are required to buy back their grain on terms that often make the export sale prohibitive.

"This court ruling gives the federal government the opportunity to make good on its campaign promise to provide us with marketing freedom," says Kevin Bender, President of the Wheat Growers. "In effect, the ruling provides the federal government with the authority to introduce a voluntary Wheat Board, where each and every farmer will have the right to decide how best to market their grain."

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