



December 13, 2005

Letter to the Editor,

I am writing in response to a recent letter to the editor in your paper in which the NFU attacks the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association for its position at the WTO trade talks.

The Wheat Growers believe trade barriers on Canadian grain and livestock exports, as well as high US and European agricultural subsidies are severely undermining Canadian farm prices. That is why we are working to ensure these price-distorting policies are eliminated or reduced as much as possible through the WTO negotiations.

For instance, in these negotiations, the European Union has already agreed to eliminate subsidies on the export of wheat, barley, oats and other commodities. But what the EU hasn't agreed to is how fast these will be eliminated. The Wheat Growers are seeking as short as time frame as possible, because these export subsidies are considered by our negotiators to be among the worst forms of price distortion, in terms of lowering returns to Canadian farmers.

The Wheat Growers are convinced that creating a more open trading environment will be better for the vast majority of Canadian farmers and will help citizens in lesser developed countries. We believe too that the resulting increase in prosperity in these poorer countries will eventually lead them to import more agricultural and consumer goods from Canada. We've seen this happen in Mexico, Korea and other developing nations and I think this is why many developing countries are, like the Wheat Growers, seeking an ambitious outcome in these trade talks.

While the Wheat Growers will always place the profitability of Canadian farmers first, it is reassuring to know that Oxfam and other international agencies agree that trade liberalization is one of the best ways to alleviate poverty among farmers in the least developed nations of the world. These negotiations are known, after all, as the Doha Development Agenda.

Will these trade talks result in free trade? Not a chance. But if we see fewer trade barriers and fewer price distortions, I am convinced this will improve overall incomes of prairie farmers.

The Wheat Growers will continue to support greater trade liberalization and other policy solutions that we believe will lead to improved profitability on our farms. We will promote these policies either on our own, or by working in co-operation with other farm organizations.

This attitude is one of the reasons why the Wheat Growers are becoming a stronger and more effective voice on behalf of its farmer members. It is also why a growing number of farmers are joining the Wheat Growers, and why critics such as the NFU will likely continue to lash out at our success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Jolly-Nagel".

Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel
President

Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.