



MEDIA RELEASE

Producers don't need another CWB survey

July 5, 2011 (Calgary, Alberta)—Producers don't need another costly survey for the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) to move to dual marketing, says Kent Erickson, chairman of the Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission (AWWPC).

Erickson, who farms 4,500 acres near Irma, Alta., opposes a CWB decision this past week to hold a survey on the future of the grain-marketing organization. The minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Gerry Ritz has said he wants to make grain marketing through the CWB voluntary beginning Aug. 1, 2012.

"We strongly support Minister Ritz's plan. Western Canadian grain producers have clearly indicated their desire for market choice in a number of ways," Erickson says. The CWB's own producer surveys over the years have shown that many farmers believe there is a role for a voluntary CWB. In a 2007 plebiscite, grain producers voted 62 per cent in favour of a dual market system.

"And farmers gave Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party a strong mandate in May's federal election," he adds. "Instead of a survey of CWB permit holders, we feel the CWB could better serve farmers by preparing a business plan that demonstrates how the organization would effectively operate in an open market."

Rick Istead, AWWPC's executive director, says: "It's time for the CWB to think out of the box, be creative and show leadership, rather than being resistant to change and defeatist in attitude."

As both consumers and suppliers of goods and services, producers deserve to have the freedom to sell their wheat and barley to whomever they choose, Istead says. "Such freedom works very well for non-board grains and for Canadian farmers outside the CWB's jurisdiction. We believe it will also work for wheat and barley in Western Canada."

The Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission is a provincial grower organization focused on a strong and sustainable winter wheat industry for the benefit of all Alberta producers. The AWWPC leads efforts to make winter wheat a viable crop option by supporting innovative research, developing value-added marketing programs, and providing producers with relevant and timely information.

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