



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

A strong voice for a vibrant, market responsive barley industry in western Canada

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For Immediate Release

WBGA WELCOMES MINISTER RITZ'S JANUARY 29 BARLEY MEETING

January 22, 2008, Airdrie, AB: In Ottawa, on January 29, prairie barley farmers and representatives from Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), GrainVision (GV), Alberta Barley Commission (ABC), Market Choice Alliance (MCA), Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA), Malting Industry Association of Canada (MIAC), Western Grain Elevator Association (WGEA), the Canadian Wheat Board and Minister Ritz will be sitting down to get the impasse on barley resolved.

"As barley growers told the government a year ago, we need to see changes to how we market our barley" states Jeff Nielsen, president of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA). The CWB has been aware of these needs for many years, yet as barley only represents 10% of their overall business they have declined to give it the respect, and the respect to those barley farmers that it needs."

The *CashPlus* malt barley plan has been fully rejected by barley farmers, MIAC, and the WGEA as it is without true consultation with actual barley farmers especially in the major malt producing provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, many of whom do not have CWB permit books.

Without honouring barley farmers or our industry partners the CWB is financially hurting these key players. Not allowing our trade to make sales to their customers after August 1 of this year, unless they agree to *CashPlus*, has already resulted in lost sales, therefore lost potential income back to the producer.

The CWB has yet to fully disclose all the details as to how *CashPlus* works for producers; there is no price transparency or true market signals. In a recent CWB bulletin, they make reference to a possible return to the producer of \$6.50 per bushel for two row barley. Two weeks ago, at a CWB farmer meeting, Western Canadian Crop Production Show, in Saskatoon, the CWB forecasted a price of \$5.00 back to west central Saskatchewan. These prices come without any true explanation of how they were arrived at. In a truly open and transparent market environment; as farmers already have in canola, pulses, oats and flax, prices and market signals will be fully visible.

WBGA, along with its members, fully support our government wishes to move forward. For years prairie farmers have been calling upon the CWB to do the same with no response. Proposing half measures, debating and fighting their own Minister responsible for them, has lead to more and more disrespect from our domestic customers but most importantly our international customers. "Canada's barley and wheat farmers do not want to see our reputation as excellent quality providers destroyed over an antiquated ideology that is completely removed from fundamental market forces." says Doug McBain, past president of WBGA.

WBGA representatives attending the January 29 meeting in Ottawa are individually held responsible for any expenses incurred to attend this meeting. It is a shame that other non progressive organizations take exception to farmers trying to make a better living from their own barley production. "We look forward to coming to a resolve on Tuesday; barley seeding intentions are being planned now and farmers need clear signals from maltsters as to what is going on" concludes Nielsen.

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