



## WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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### For Immediate Release

## CWB TURNS A BLIND EYE TO PRODUCERS' MOST POPULAR OPTION

**Airdrie, AB – July 12, 2011:** The upcoming non-binding plebiscite being conducted by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) fails to recognize producers' real choice, according to the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA).

"In the latest CWB producer survey, released in June, the largest percentage of producers supported an open market with a voluntary CWB when given the choice", explains Brian Otto, president of the WBGA.

When producers were given three choices, status quo (single desk), or voluntary CWB in an open market, or open market without the CWB in any form, the largest percentage of producers favored the voluntary CWB choice.

"The CWB plebiscite lacks any credibility when it denies producers the ability to vote for their preferred option. The WBGA finds the actions of the Board of Directors of the CWB irresponsible to deny producers that option" says Otto. The ballots for the CWB plebiscite will be arriving in producer's mail boxes next week.

The CWB plebiscite is non-binding and uses only CWB permit book holders as the basic voters' list. "Conducting a plebiscite that is not binding and using an incomplete voters list, is clearly a waste of producer's money", states Otto.

"The directors of the CWB have a real opportunity to show leadership and keep the CWB as a viable marketing option for producers, but instead are stubbornly going with an 'all or nothing' approach", adds Doug Robertson, Alberta vice president for WBGA.

Minister Ritz says that the CWB plebiscite is irrelevant and will not sway this Government as it moves to give marketing freedom to producers in Western Canada.

The Agriculture Ministers of the three western provinces (BC, AB, and SK) that account for over 80% of the production in Western Canada support the Federal Government's move to allow producers the freedom to market their own grain.

"The CWB Board of Directors would be well advised to face the reality of the future of the CWB. They need to develop a business model that will allow farmers to have the CWB as a viable choice in the future. It is time to move forward and focus on working within the constructive changes that are going to occur August 1 of 2012," continues Otto.

Tom Hewson, Saskatchewan VP of the WBGA summed up the situation facing the CWB. "With the inevitable changes that are coming, the CWB Board of Directors have a responsibility to every producer in Western Canada to make sure that the CWB is in a position to take part in an open and commercial market place next August" .

Western Barley Growers Association is a strong voice for a vibrant, market responsive barley industry in western Canada.

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