



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

WBGA APPLAUDS MINISTER RITZ AND WELCOME FARMERS' FREEDOM AUGUST 2012

AIRDRIE, AB – October 18, 2011: Directors and members of the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) were present when Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz reiterated on Monday the importance of providing marketing freedom to Western Canadian wheat and barley farmers. "Barley and wheat farmers, as of August 1, 2012 will finally be able to choose where to sell their barley" states Brian Otto, president of the WBGA. "We know there are many more opportunities out there for our barley and wheat; we know marketing choice will allow producers to capture higher returns for their farms and we know this is good for our rural communities. Yesterday's announcement finally gives farmers the end result they have been working towards for years - control over their own grain and an environment of choice to market their own barley and wheat " concludes Otto.

Yesterday Minister Gerry Ritz stated, "The Harper Government is committed to delivering on its long-standing promise to give Western Canadian grain farmers the same marketing freedom as farmers have in other parts of Canada and around the world".

Today the Harper Government has tabled legislation in Parliament to remove the monopoly control of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) over the sales of barley and wheat in Western Canada. The WBGA fully supports this legislation that was tabled in the House of Commons.

This announcement by the Federal government will give producers and industry partners the ability to start pricing and contracting new crop sales without being forced to sell into a monopoly system. The CWB will continue to play a role in marketing as none of the regulatory changes take away the producers' right to sell to the CWB if they desire.

"This is about freedom and equality for Western Canadian farmers," Doug McBain, a director and past President of the WBGA said following Minister Ritz's speech. "Finally, we're going to have our marketing freedom."

"The Western Barley Growers for 35 years have been calling for choice in marketing for barley" comments vice president Doug Robertson. "Now producers can 'Embrace the Future' of marketing possibilities and growth in the barley sector will finally begin. For too long barley and wheat innovation has lagged behind all our other non-Board crops. Now these two crops, and the farmers that grow them will have a chance to prosper as well".

"These changes will encourage investment in Western Canadian agriculture and unleash the true potential of the entrepreneurial spirit of Western Canadian farmers" says Otto.

WBGA thanks Minister Ritz and his government for their commitment to marketing freedom.

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

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