



**news release**

*for immediate release...*

**Alberta Barley Commission applauds reappointment of Minister Gerry Ritz**

**Calgary, AB (May 19, 2011)** – The Alberta Barley Commission is pleased with the reappointment of Saskatchewan MP Gerry Ritz as Canada’s Minister of Agriculture.

“The Alberta Barley Commission has been impressed with Minister Ritz’s commitment to building Canada’s agriculture industry,” says Commission Chair Matt Sawyer, a barley grower from Acme, Alberta. “As farmers, we enjoy working with a Minister who has an agriculture background and a real respect for farmers.”

Sawyer also expressed confidence in Minister Ritz’s ability to handle the transition to a new grain marketing system

“These are exciting times and it’s good to have a steady hand at the wheel,” says Sawyer. “Yesterday’s announcement that the Conservative government will be ending the Canadian Wheat Board’s monopoly on marketing wheat and barley in 2012 means that change is coming. I’m encouraged that the industry is leading this change in a cautious and responsible manner.”

Moving to the proposed dual marketing system will require changes to legislation, which are expected to be introduced this fall.

“Our goal is to have a smooth transition to the new system,” explains Commission CEO Mike Leslie. “Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s decision to keep Minister Ritz in Agriculture indicates his understanding of the complex nature of the transitions required in agriculture. We look forward to working with Minister Ritz on this and other initiatives.”

These other initiatives include international trade agreements, a railway service review, ensuring long term financial support for institutions such as the Canadian International Grains Institute and the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre, and modernizing the Canada Grain Act.

*Canada’s only barley commission, the Alberta Barley Commission is a not-for-profit organization directed, funded, and controlled by the province’s 17,000 barley producers. The Commission coordinates and sponsors research, market development, technology transfer and policy development on behalf of its producers.*

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