



## **Position Paper on the Proposed Barley Plebiscite - November 15, 2006**

### **The Question**

Alberta Barley Commission (ABC) wants to make sure a professional polling firm is brought in to draft the question or questions.

ABC wants the question to be as simple as possible and as a first choice prefers a single question with a yes/no response. If this is not part of the consensus discussion movement can be made to additional questions as long as they are clear, concise and non-confusing, and do not use loaded words like "status quo" or "current situation", and do not use the CWB's name instead use "the marketing monopoly" so as to remove "Canada" and "history" from the equation, and add marketing choice as a positive option versus a monopoly that controls Western Canadian farmers only.

### **Eligibility**

ABC believes the vote (due to section 47.1 of the act) is restricted to "the grain" in question. If this is so then we see no other option but to include all western Canadian barley farmers (farmers within the Designated Area of the Prairies) as eligible to vote.

ABC defines a farmer as producing a minimum of 40 MT or 40 acres of barley (annually) at least once in the last three year period.

ABC defines all farmers who are active participants on the farm as eligible to vote even if they are part of a larger corporate entity or as part of a partnership etc.

### **Weighted Vote**

ABC believes there should be some mechanism of weighting the vote to ensure those with the most to win or lose have a proportional vote. How this is determined should not overly complicate the vote or cause it to be called into question. Producers who raise 10 times the minimum acreage or production for example may earn a second vote (400 MT or 400 acres).

The votes should be tallied by province, by acreage voted, and by tonnage voted to reflect the size of the operations and the strength of the vote in those operations. 80% of the barley may be produced by 20% of the growers - how they feel about the question is crucial for the industry. While the other 80% of the growers need a vote, they may not hold the future in their hands.

### **Creating the Eligibility/Voters List**

The Federal government should use its lists from the designated area and cross reference them to ensure the widest public distribution and eligibility possible, and keep the number of farmers who are not included, and who would therefore have to make a separate Statutory Declaration to be added to the list, to an absolute minimum. Sources to be explored include the Farm Fuel Tax numbers, the CAIS information, Crop Insurance, GOPP lists and even NISA lists. In regions or areas where good information is not as readily available the government should look at a third party confidential party to collect other regional or provincial lists that may broaden the scope of the vote.

A provision for adding eligible producers to the voters list must be included (some type of Statutory Declaration) that is as simple yet verifiable as possible so as not to discourage its use by legitimate producers.