



March 28, 2006

Minister Chuck Strahl
Attention: Laurie Throness
Chief of Staff Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
930 Carling Avenue, Sir John Carling Building
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0C5

Dear Minister Strahl,

The Alberta Barley Commission is one of your key stakeholders, representing the interests of a large majority of the 17,500 farmers who produce over 5,000,000 MT of barley, 31 % of Canada's 2005 production. We produce a product destined for domestic feeding industries that is the base for the livestock sector as well as a feedstock for domestic and offshore malting plants and millers. My member's operations are efficient, productive and innovative. They are also very highly dependent on international markets and the regulatory decisions made by government.

Generations of Canadian farmers have survived through the decades by maintaining their competitive edge, by being some of the most efficient crop producers in the world. Canadian Farmers, when enabled with advanced production tools are early adopters of technology allowing them to maintain their competitiveness in a distorted global marketplace. Slow release fertilizers represent the next generation of crop production technology for Canadian grains and oilseeds. The fertilizers of tomorrow will be tailor made for specific crops, in specific regions. Canada is the world leader of this value added, slow release technology and has the potential to be a center of excellence in providing the crop nutrient advancements of tomorrow.

Our U.S. competitors have had access to this Canadian developed technology for years despite entering the Canadian regulatory system prior to entering the US regulatory process. Unfortunately the subsequent advancements in agronomic research and development have primarily benefited our American competitors. This product, still very much in the development stage, is manufactured in the Canadian Prairies and ideally situated to provide Western Canadian Farmers with this leading edge technology first but it has been sitting before the CFIA awaiting certification for over 5 years now.

Slow release technology offers growers superior agronomic performance with improved yields and reduced input costs. Farmers can obtain the same crop yields with up to a 25% reduction in nitrogen use. There are also significant environmental benefits such as dramatic in-field greenhouse gas emission reduction and a reduction in nutrient leaching.

Slow release technologies meet the environmental, societal, and economic objectives of the farm community and Canadians at large.

The Alberta Barley Commission asks that the federal and provincial governments work collaboratively to ensure this Canadian technology is available for Canadian farmers. We must ensure that this innovative slow release technology serves to benefit Canadian producers and Canada's rural communities.

Sincerely,

Mike Leslie
General Manager

CC Hon. Doug Horner