



News Release

Alberta Barley Commission praises government for upcoming plebiscite question

Jan. 22, 2007 (Red Deer, Alberta) – The Alberta Barley Commission praised the federal government today for its question in an upcoming plebiscite on barley marketing in Western Canada and the criteria for voter eligibility.

“The question truly and fairly represents the viable possibilities open to Alberta barley producers in today’s global marketplace,” said Terry Young, the Commission’s chairman and a Lacombe barley farmer. “Since the plebiscite was announced this past fall, we have encouraged the government to develop a question that would be clear, concise and represent all Prairie barley producers. It has listened well to those involved.”

Speaking in Red Deer, Alberta, the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, said the question on the plebiscite ballot will be:

- The Canadian Wheat Board should retain the single desk for the marketing of barley in domestic human consumption and export markets.
- I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer.
- The Canadian Wheat Board should not have a role in the marketing of barley.

“We have long supported an environment that would give our producers as many options for marketing as possible. Many want the ability to sell directly to export and domestic customers and markets. Others could well continue to sell through the CWB, which is recognized worldwide for its market intelligence and knowledge,” said Mike Leslie, the Commission’s general manager.

Young and Leslie also praised Strahl for the voter eligibility criteria: primarily, active farmers must have grown barley in at least one of the past five years (2002 to 2005). Extenuating circumstances will be considered and those who do not receive a ballot by Feb. 8, 2007, can request one along with a declaration form from the election coordinator, KPMG (1-888-3BARLEY).

“We congratulate the federal and provincial governments for their collaborative and cooperative efforts to compile a voter list,” said Young. “Both levels of government have been committed to seeing all active barley producers participate in this important vote. Now it’s time for farmers to make their voice heard.”

Since its inception in 1991, the Commission has supported market choice as a means of giving producers more control over their businesses and cash flow. Market choice would also allow Alberta producers to decide when and where they sell their barley and at what price. As well, it would give producers more options on crop production and opportunities to invest in long-term client relationships, new technology, production methods and value chains.

The Alberta Barley Commission (www.albertabarley.com) is a not-for-profit corporation organized, funded, directed and controlled by the province's 17,500 barley producers. The Commission coordinates and sponsors research, market development and policy development on behalf of its producers.

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For more information contact:

Terry Young, Chairman
Alberta Barley Commission
(403) 391-2408

Mike Leslie, General Manager
Alberta Barley Commission
(403) 281-4802