



Honourable Doug Horner  
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology  
Room # 324 Legislature Building  
10800-97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Monday, February 12, 2007

Dear Minister Horner,

The Alberta Barley Commission wishes to thank the provincial government for its continued support of a sustainable and profitable agriculture industry. The barley plebiscite which is currently underway has greatly benefited from the governments' involvement in preparing the list of voters. These are truly groundbreaking times for agricultural producers in this province. Dynamics such as the barley plebiscite, biofuel initiatives, and trade action on US corn will certainly affect the way we do business in the future. It is our sincere hope that research and development can continue to keep pace and benefit future generations of Albertans.

As a fellow stakeholder in the Canada Alberta Barley Development Agreement, together with the Province and AAFC, we appreciate your past, and hope for your continued, support of this project. It has benefited barley producers with long term work in genomics, breeding, agronomic research and crop genetics and by providing improved feed and malt varieties for our customers. Producers across the province have seen great returns as a result of this tripartite agreement.

Dr. James Helm and his team at the Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre have been truly invaluable contributors to Alberta agriculture. Barley varieties developed there have resulted in more than \$400,000,000 thus far in farm gate sales of these "Lacombe varieties." The Centre's combination of malt and feed-barley work is paramount to the success of our members. As you know, upwards of 80 % of malt varieties often end up as feed. Lacombe's staff applies their knowledge of both markets to maximize farmer earnings with new higher yielding, higher quality varieties for our malt, livestock, and Alberta's value added industry.

The ABC supports Lacombe's agronomic program which seeks to get out ahead of fusarium head blight disease, nitrogen uptake challenges, and to develop drought resistance. Mounting threats from global warming and climate change highlight the need for research in these and other emerging areas. It is necessary to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Therefore, long term R&D is essential for future sustainability in agriculture and the success of our producers. The red meat industry and value added processors also need to anticipate and deal with new threats such as myco-toxins in our food industry. We are looking towards AARI to assist us and our customers as we seek to get ahead of these challenges.

During this time of shifting priorities in the Federal and Provincial Governments we see a move to new priorities in bio-products and bio-fuel as well as more value adding initiatives. However, it is important that these new initiatives have access to *new* funding and people resources so that critical long term programs for the feeding and crop sector are not marginalized for a short term gain to supply those resources. For even these new ventures require a strong cereals and livestock sector in the province for their long term success.

We are confident that the provincial government recognizes this and we wish to work with your new team to build a successful agri-food research sector. We will be working closely with the livestock sector to build a provincial alliance to ensure the crop, feed, livestock, and meat sectors are aligned and moving forward for a sustainable future. Our meeting in Calgary on March 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the next stage in this process. We are hoping you will be able to join us. An invitation has gone out under a separate cover.

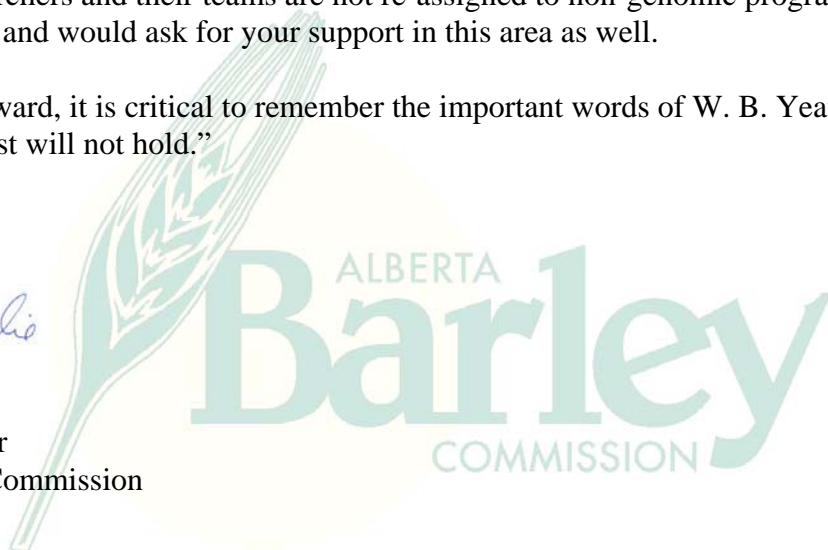
We will also continue to work with the Federal Government to ensure federal breeding and agronomic researchers and their teams are not re-assigned to non-genomic programs or to non-agronomic areas and would ask for your support in this area as well.

As we move forward, it is critical to remember the important words of W. B. Yeats: “if the core is not stable, the rest will not hold.”

Sincerely,



Mike Leslie  
General Manager  
Alberta Barley Commission



Cc. Bob Fessenden  
Deputy Minister