



Monday February 12, 2007

Dear MLA,

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' cooperation 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, trade action on US corn, and ongoing research will certainly affect the way we do our business in the future.

As a part of the rural vote, we greatly appreciate your past efforts and continued support of the Canada Alberta Barley Development Agreement- a joint partnership with the Province, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Alberta Barley Commission. It has benefited barley producers and the livestock feeding industry with long term work in genomics, breeding, agronomic research, and crop genetics. Producers across the province have seen great returns as a result of this tripartite agreement. Over ½ of the Commission's investment of producer dollars for research goes to the Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre's (LFCDC) core programs.

Dr. James Helm and his team at the Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre have been indefatigable contributors to Alberta agriculture. Barley varieties developed there raise royalties- which under the Barley Agreement are re-invested into additional research, further improving barley varieties for the food, feed, and malt industries. In fact, Lacombe developed varieties have, over the years, resulted in more than \$400,000,000 in farm gate sales of those varieties! The Centre's combination of malt and feed-barley work is paramount to the success of our members. Upwards of 80 % of malt varieties end up as feed barley, to which Lacombe's expert staff applies specialized research, maximizing farmer earnings as well as developing new higher yielding, higher quality feed varieties for our livestock feeding industry. This forms the basis for Alberta's value-added sector.

Dr. Helm and his professional team work directly in those rural areas which stand to benefit the most from his dedication to excellence. His enduring efforts to build the base for our value added food and livestock industries have resulted in the creation of the J.H. Helm Cereal Research Centre on the facilities' grounds in Lacombe.

During this time of shifting priorities in all levels of government, we see a move to new priorities in bio-products, bio-fuel, and more value-adding strategies. It is important that these new initiatives have access to *new* funding and people resources. Existing long-term programs for the feeding and crop sector should not be jeopardized in order to supply resources for new ventures in the short term. For even these new ventures require a strong cereals sector in the province for their long term success.

We are confident the Alberta Government recognizes this and we wish to work with you in building a sustainable agri-food industry. We will also be working closely with the livestock sector to build a provincial alliance ensuring that crop, feed, livestock, meat sectors are aligned and moving forward for a sustainable future and we hope the government of Alberta can be a part of that success and not an additional challenge for producers.

We would very much like to meet with you to share more information on the Lacombe Centre's programs, the Barley Agreement, and the future of our grain – feeding – processing value chain under development, and ask you to encourage your fellow MLA's to become involved. We, the rural supporters of your government, want to work with the government in these times of change for long term success.

Sincerely,



Mike Leslie  
General Manager  
Alberta Barley Commission

