



## **Alberta Farmers fear loss of important field trials For Immediate Release**

**May 23, 2007 (Calgary, Alberta)** -- One of the most important decisions a farmer faces every year is what to grow. Alberta farmers fear that decision will be much tougher in 2008. After 2007, the Province of Alberta will no longer fund nor provide any in-kind support for regional varietal evaluation trails (known as RVTs), which compare crop varieties in actual field and weather conditions.

RVT results are published annually in the Alberta Seed Guide and used widely by Alberta farmers to select the seed variety that best suits their soil zone, climate and management style. In 2006, the Province provided funding and some sites and crop coordinators for 43 RVTs for barley varieties as well as more than 200 RVTs for other Alberta crops, among them wheat, oats, rye, canola, field peas and lentils.

"The resources and knowledge the Province brought to RVTs are unparalleled. The Province's participation ensured the trials were conducted using sound scientific processes, practices and analysis," says Terry Young, chair of the Alberta Barley Commission. "Alberta producers respect and rely on the expertise of the Province's field crop specialists and experts."

"Our 17,000 members rely on the results of trials because they are unbiased, independent information. The Alberta Seed Guide is one of Alberta's most trusted sources of agricultural information and helps farms make relevant decisions to remain competitive in an ever-changing marketplace," says Mike Leslie, CEO of the Alberta Barley Commission.

The effectiveness of the Alberta RVT testing program has been well demonstrated. Rapid adoption is essential to meet the needs of the international value-added processing industry. Results from the RVT program provide data to all sectors of the grain industry. This ensures Alberta produces what the market seeks. In order for farmers to invest new varieties, they must know how they perform in each agro-climatic zone, Young says.

Partners in Alberta's RVT program are investigating a partnership with growers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia to create a Prairie-wide program, but are concerned about maintaining the results' independence and neutrality. Meanwhile, they are committed to consulting and collaborating with the Province to encourage its ongoing support of RVTs.

The Alberta Barley Commission ([www.albertabarley.com](http://www.albertabarley.com)) is a not-for-profit organization funded, directed and controlled by Alberta's barley farmers. Established in 1991, the Commission coordinates and sponsors research, market development and policy development on behalf of its 17,000 producers.

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