



Honourable Iris Evans  
Minister of Employment, Immigration and Industry  
Room #208 Legislature Building  
10800-97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Monday, February 12, 2007

Dear Minister Evans,

The Alberta Barley Commission (ABC) wishes to thank the provincial government for its continued support of a sustainable and profitable agriculture industry and rural economy. 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 and the development of new local value added industries 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 we can develop new businesses and prosperity in the rural areas of the province to encourage growth and development to benefit future generations of Albertans.

You may not be aware of the Canada Alberta Barley Development Agreement, a three way agreement between ABC, the Province and AAFC. It has been working to develop new barley varieties for the benefit of barley producers, feeders and food manufacturers with long term work in plant breeding, agronomic research and by providing improved feed, food and malt varieties for our customers. Producers across the province have seen great returns as a result of this tripartite agreement and a number of small start-up firms have been created to take advantage of these innovations.

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 and their customers in the malt, livestock, and 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 of barley also need to anticipate and deal with new threats such as myco-toxins in our food industry.

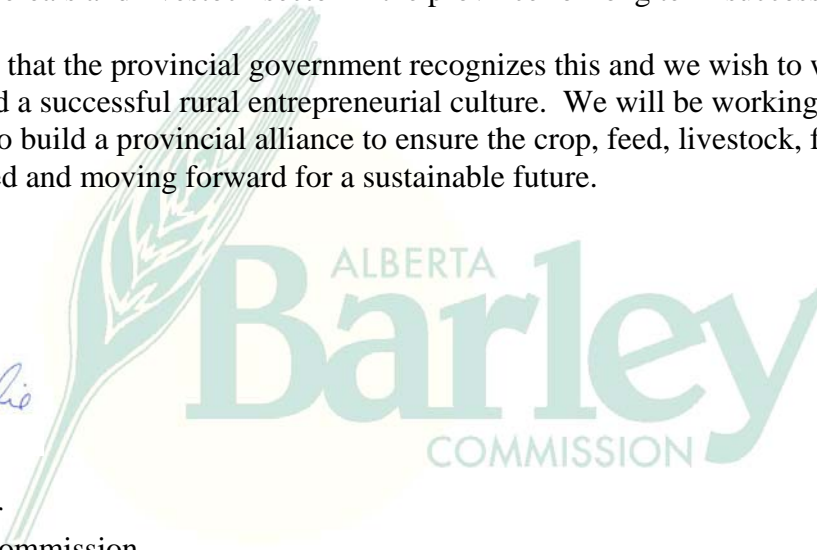
During this time of shifting priorities in the Federal and Provincial Governments we see a move to new priorities in bio-products and bio-fuel as well as more value adding initiatives. However, it is important that these new initiatives have access to *new* funding and people resources so that critical existing long term programs for the feed stock of those sectors is not marginalized simply for a short term gain to supply those additional resources. For strong rural companies we will require a strong cereals and livestock sector in the province for 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 rural entrepreneurial culture. We will be working closely with the livestock sector to build a provincial alliance to ensure the crop, feed, livestock, food and meat sectors are aligned and moving forward for a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



Mike Leslie  
General Manager  
Alberta Barley Commission



Cc. Ulysses Currie  
Deputy Minister