



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2008

Minister, MP's, producers stand up for orderly marketing of grain worth hundreds of millions to Manitoba's economy

(Winnipeg) The federal government is proceeding with reckless haste on all fronts related to Canada's valuable grain sector and this could have devastating consequences, according to producers and grain inspectors as well as representatives of the federal opposition parties.

At a news conference in Winnipeg, representatives from Save My CWB Campaign were joined by Manitoba's Minister of Agriculture Rosann Wowchuk, Winnipeg-area Liberal and NDP MP's, Bill Nicholson, the elected District 9 Director of the Canadian Wheat Board, Hudson Bay Route Association President Arnold Grambo and a representative for the Agriculture Union – PSAC to call attention to the ill-advised rush to fundamentally transform the grain sector.

Winnipeg area MP's Pat Martin, Anita Neville, Raymond Simard and Judy Wasylcia-Leis, drew attention to the significance of the orderly marketing of grains to the economy of Manitoba and of its capital. Winnipeg is home to the head offices of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) and the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), and orderly marketing of grains is a big part of the province's \$3.7 billion agricultural industry.

Within the past month, the federal Conservative Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz has:

- threatened to legislate an end to barley marketing by the Wheat Board, despite overwhelming evidence that producers do not support this option and a clear ruling by the Federal Court of Canada;
- introduced legislation (Bill C-39) that will gut the Grain Commission, the independent body that provides essential services to grain producers. C-39 completely ignores the unanimous recommendations of an all-party Parliamentary committee for reform of the CGC;
- decreed an end to Kernel Visual Distinguishability (KVD) in the face of a broad consensus that a new mechanism to identify and protect wheat varieties and the integrity of our wheat exports cannot be developed before 2010;
- made the patronage appointment of former Reform MP Elwin Hermanson as Chief Commissioner of the Grain Commission and oversaw the firing of Wheat Board Vice President Deanna Allen.

"This Conservative government is putting the future of farmers and of all Canadians who benefit from grain at risk," said Ken Sigurdson, spokesperson for the Save my CWB Campaign. Sigurdson noted that the CWB's S&P credit rating had recently been downgraded due to the uncertainty generated by Ritz's actions. "The government needs to listen to the

elected Directors of the Wheat Board; the only body democratically elected by all of the farmers of Western Canada," Sigurdson added.

By introducing Bill C-39, the Conservative Government ignored the advice of the House of Commons Agriculture Committee which called for cost/benefit analysis and pilot projects before proceeding with reforms to the Canadian Grain Commission. Delaying Bill C-39 would give the government the time to do the required due diligence.

"The Conservatives are only one party in Canada's parliament and thankfully they are not a majority government. We call on parliament to reject this ill-advised and poorly prepared legislation that will gut the Canadian Grain Commission and put grain exports at risk. Parliament should send the government back to the drawing board to get this bill right," said Howard Willems, Vice President of Agriculture Union – PSAC. "C-39 should be withdrawn and only brought back if and when it is designed to support Canada's farmers and their international reputation for excellence".

The Save My CWB Campaign is a group of farmers and activists committed to giving voice to the majority of farmers who have voted for a strong and vibrant Canadian Wheat Board. Our web site is savemycwb.ca

The Agriculture Union – PSAC represents 9500 people who work at Agriculture Canada, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and other workplaces.

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