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**national farmers union**  
*In Union Is Strength*

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## **SUPPORT FOR WHEAT BOARD IMPORTANT AS WTO TALKS HEAT UP**

Dear Editor,

Negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) are approaching a critical point, particularly with regard to agriculture.

The United States and European Union (E.U.) have targeted the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), and are calling for measures that would end the CWB's ability to maximize returns from the marketplace to Canadian farmers.

In the lead-up to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong December 13-18, 2005, the U.S. and the E.U. are exerting tremendous pressure on Canada to agree to eliminate the CWB's single desk monopoly on export sales of wheat and barley.

The CWB's single desk allows farmers to receive higher prices on the world market. Independent economists have quantified the CWB's average single-desk price premiums to farmers at more than \$265 million annually for wheat and more than \$72 million annually for barley.

The WTO negotiations are the latest in a string of attacks on the CWB. The U.S. has tried for years to prove that the CWB is an unfair trader in the international market, but in each of the 14 complaints, all lost by the U.S., the CWB has been successful in proving that it operates in a non-trade distorting and commercial manner. The U.S. has now changed its strategy and is attempting to use the WTO negotiations to kill the CWB. Because there is no basis for the U.S. argument that the CWB distorts or limits trade, the U.S. is simply arguing that if they have to give up something in the negotiations, then so does everyone else, regardless of the facts.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has consistently supported the CWB and single-desk selling of export wheat and barley. Western Canadian farmers have also consistently supported the CWB's single desk selling powers through a series of Wheat Board Director elections and plebiscites.

We are insisting that the Canadian government state, unequivocally, that Canada will refuse to end the CWB's ability to be the single desk seller of western Canada's export wheat and barley. The thousands of farmers who agree with us must make their views known to the federal government, either individually or through our organization – preferably both. If you support a strong and effective CWB, we want to hear from you as soon as possible. Contact the NFU at [nfu@nfu.ca](mailto:nfu@nfu.ca) or write to us at 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6.

Sincerely,  
Stewart Wells

President - National Farmers Union