



For immediate release
October 5, 2006

PRAIRIE PRODUCER COALITION FORMED TO ADDRESS THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD AND GRAIN FARMING IN WESTERN CANADA

Winnipeg -- Major farm organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have come together with a unanimous position that the Canadian Wheat Board Act must be respected and that there can be no unilateral changes to the Canadian Wheat Board by the federal government.

A coalition has been formed consisting of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), Wild Rose Agricultural Producers (WRAP), National Farmers Union (NFU), Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), and Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS).

The coalition is concerned about the mandate given to a task force recently created by federal agriculture minister Chuck Strahl, which has been instructed by the federal government to examine not if, but how, to eliminate the single desk.

The coalition will develop and examine a series of questions related to the value of the CWB and the loss of the single desk, and release a report to ensure that producers have access to the full range of information. The coalition held its initial meeting in Winnipeg yesterday.

SARM president David Marit said, "Our members gave us clear direction in March 2006 to lobby the federal government to continue its financial support of the government guarantees and single desk selling of the CWB."

NFU president Stewart Wells said, "The federal government's process and task force has cut farmers out of the loop. The farm organizations in this coalition are taking deliberate steps to put farmers back in control. It's our board; it's our business."

KAP president David Rolfe said, "Grain farmers across Western Canada need to have balanced information presented to them to generate debate about the implications regarding the proposal by the federal government to eliminate the CWB single desk."

WRAP president Bill Dobson said, "It has always been the position of Wild Rose Agricultural Producers that farmers should be the ones who make changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. I see the information provided by this coalition enabling producers to make intelligent decisions on the issue."

APAS president Ken McBride said, "It's extremely important that the information be available so that producers can make an informed decision."

The provincial governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan support the initiative. The coalition will release their report to prairie producers and the federal and provincial governments in the near future.

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Attachment: Photo from the October 4, 2006 coalition meeting.

From left: David Rolfe (KAP President), Bill Dobson (WRAP President), Ken McBride (APAS President), Stewart Wells (NFU President), Jim Hallick (SARM Vice President), David Marit (SARM President).