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**national farmers union**

***In Union Is Strength***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ANTI-CWB FORCES PROTESTING TOO MUCH**

The Canadian Wheat Board's new program offering the option of cash-price contracts for malting barley should be looked at carefully by farmers, says Stewart Wells, President of the National Farmers Union (NFU), precisely because of the howls of protest coming from the maltsters and their shill organizations.

“The maltsters and their friends, including the Harper Conservatives, want to foster an adversarial relationship between farmers and the CWB in order to destroy CWB marketing altogether. In this case, building an adversarial relationship requires a rejection of any and all CWB plans to work with farmers to maximize returns from barley marketing. The maltsters and their friends/shills cannot tolerate any thoughts of the CWB and farmers working more closely together.”

The CWB plan must be seen in the context of the Harper Government's attempts to move the CWB away from a commercial entity engaged in maximizing grain sale returns for farmers, and instead reduce the CWB to a political football. The gag order, wherein the CWB is not allowed to explain the advantages of single desk selling; election tampering by the government; the appointments of anti-CWB personnel to the CWB Board of Directors; and the firing of the CEO are all examples of Harper's actions to destroy the CWB's commercial effectiveness.

There are pros and cons to the new barley pricing program, and farmers should investigate for themselves, said Wells. While the new program offers the potential for higher returns, it also opens up the potential for lower prices – reflecting the risks of an open market. This moves farmers much closer to “commodity trap” marketing as defined by a study published by the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Association in 2007.

Those risks are tempered, however, by the retention of the CWB single desk and the pooling system option for farmers.

Wells said the maltsters and grain companies, along with the Harper Conservatives, won't be satisfied until the clock is turned back to the 1800s, when private grain companies controlled the open market, with no institutions like the CWB or the Canadian Grain Commission looking out for farmers.

“It is not the mandate of the CWB or farmers to maximize returns to maltsters and private grain companies,” stated Wells. “Getting rid of the CWB would move millions of dollars from farmers’ pockets to maltsters and grain companies. It’s no wonder the companies howl when the CWB moves to work more closely with farmers.”

- 30 -

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