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**FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS SHUT OUT
OF INDUSTRY/GOVERNMENT MEETING ON BARLEY MARKETING**

OTTAWA, Ont.—Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz today convened a meeting on barley marketing in Ottawa. He summoned representatives from the Canadian Wheat Board. He invited representatives of Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, Rahr Malting, and Viterra. And he invited representatives from small-membership anti-CWB organizations such as the Western Barley Growers Association and the Market Choice Alliance. But he refused to allow participation by the farm organizations that represent the vast majority of farmers—the NFU, affiliates of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (such as Wild Rose Agricultural Producers), or other organizations that support a strong CWB.

NFU Board member Glenn Tait commented: “The organizations that represent the majority of farmers have been locked out of today’s meeting. This is a minority government meeting with organizations that represent a minority of farmers. And their deliberations are being aided by representatives of some the world’s largest agribusiness corporations.” Tait farms and raises barley and wheat near Meota, Saskatchewan (near North Battleford).

Tait continued: “Gerry Ritz is not representing the majority of farmers in western Canada, not even the majority in his riding. I live in his riding; he’s my MP. In the recent CWB Directors’ elections, in the CWB District that overlaps Ritz’s riding, the pro-CWB candidate received nearly three times as many votes as the second-place finisher—an anti-CWB candidate.”

Tait concluded: “Gerry Ritz does not represent farmers. The hand-picked anti-CWB farm organizations in his meeting do not represent farmers. And Cargill, ADM, the malt companies, and the big beer makers do not represent farmers. Farmers overwhelmingly agree on one thing: when it comes to the future of the CWB, let farmers decide. Gerry Ritz and his corporate allies have taken a different approach: leave farmers *outside*.”

The NFU, Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board, Save My CWB, and other organizations will be holding a news conference today in Ottawa at 10AM (Ottawa time) to discuss government and corporate tactics to terminate CWB barley marketing.

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