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The Globe and Mail

December 1, 2005 Thursday

**SECTION:** REPORT ON BUSINESS: CANADIAN; BUSINESS TICKER; Pg. B16

**LENGTH:** 394 words

**HEADLINE:** Wheat board could lose monopoly under Tories, MP says

**BYLINE:** Reuter News Agency

**BODY:**

The Canadian Wheat Board stands to lose its marketing monopoly if the Conservative Party wins the federal election, one Conservative legislator said yesterday.

"We believe the Canadian Wheat Board should be voluntary," said David Anderson, a Saskatchewan member of Parliament.

The CWB markets Western Canadian grain from a single desk, something Mr. Anderson said about half the wheat producers in the Prairies do not want.

If the CWB's single-desk marketing were to be eliminated, western wheat and barley producers would have a choice and the opportunity to benefit from the value-added sector, he said.

But CWB president Adrian Measner said the single-desk marketing structure is necessary.

"The single desk allows us to compete very effectively in an international marketplace that's dominated by a handful of large companies, and so that gives us the power to compete there and it also gives us the power to get premiums from a number of customers and bring those premiums back to farmers," Mr. Measner told Reuters on the sidelines of the Canada Grains Council annual meeting in Ottawa yesterday.

"So, if you change that, if you have a dual market or an open market - they end up being the same thing - we will be put in a situation where we're trying to still market grain but competing against very large companies . . . and we would be at a significant disadvantage and I think the organization would disappear very quickly."

The CWB's monopoly has also been targeted by the European Union and the United States, and is entering a critical time with WTO negotiations. The CWB expects the Dec. 13-18 ministerial meeting in Hong Kong will set the tone for a draft deal necessary to resume trade talks.

Liberal CWB minister Reg Alcock said it is premature to talk about making changes to the marketing structure while WTO negotiations are taking place.

"Our position is we should let those negotiations go ahead and get a sense of what the international environment is before we draw any conclusions," Mr. Alcock said.

He pointed out the CWB is controlled by farmers who elect its directors, and that ultimately these are the people who should make the decision as it is their commodity they're selling.

The CWB, which traces its history back to the First World War, is the largest wheat and barley marketer in the world, the board said. Reuters

**NOTES:**

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**LENGTH:** 593 words

**HEADLINE:** Anderson attending WTO conference in Hong Kong

**BODY:**

An invitation to attend the World Trade Organization's conference in Hong Kong was too good an opportunity to pass up for David Anderson, Conservative candidate for Cypress Hills-Grasslands.

In spite of being in the midst of a federal election campaign, Anderson has been invited to attend as a part of the official Canadian government delegation.

He will be in Hong Kong from Dec. 13 to 18 to voice his opinions at the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference.

"There are three main priorities. One of them is to get export subsidization levels reduced. The Europeans are the culprits there. They said that they will reduce that," Anderson said during a Dec. 8 press conference. "The second one is domestic subsidization. The Americans have been the big domestic subsidizers. They've put a proposal forward. We don't think it goes far enough, but it is a start of suggesting that they would be willing to reduce their domestic subsidization. And the third issue, and the real kind of catching point, has been market access. Whether countries are going to be given access to other nations markets. That's the one that's really holding up things here. We need to see where the discussions go on that because it's just a huge field and there's a lot of things happening there."

Opposition members are not allowed into actual negotiation sessions, but there is a parliamentary forum going on in conjunction with the meetings. Anderson said this gives Canadians a chance to meet with other countries, delegations, and talk to people about their positions and explain his positions.

"Our (the Conservative Party of Canada) position hasn't changed. It's been the same since 2000 and prior to that, and that is that we believe the Canadian Wheat Board should be voluntary and that it can and will work as a volunteer marketing agency."

Anderson noted at the WTO, the talks will include three issues dealing with the Wheat Board. The first involves the Board's single desk selling, and internationally do they want to have those single desk marketing desk agencies. The other two have already affected farmers, and these are the issues of initial price guarantees, guaranteed by the federal government, plus some of the foreign credit programs.

"Both of those issues this government's already said they're willing to give up. I guess we were asking them why did you give that up early in the negotiations. Now all you've got left is the single-desk to negotiate on. Other countries are putting pressure on that."

"We played our cards early. We gave in early. And we think that was bad negotiating policy," Anderson said.

"What we're going to do is to try and make sure that this government is actually negotiating honestly on behalf of farmers."

"They've already given up two of the three things that were very important to farmers regarding the Canadian Wheat Board. We're going to make sure that they're not throwing a whole pile of other things out here without us getting something in return."

Anderson said it is tough to leave in the early stages of an election campaign, but the Southwest deserves to be heard from on a global stage.

"For us in the Southwest here, export is absolutely crucial. Just about all of our agriculture in this area relies on being able to export it. So we need a good agreement here in order to get access to some of these foreign markets. Right now the Europeans are the ones that are holding up really the debate, because they don't want to give market access to their markets. They're going to have to move on that if they want to have an agreement."

**GRAPHIC: ANDERSON ;**

**LOAD-DATE: February 20, 2006**

## CANDIDATES GRILLED ON AGRICULTURE PLATFORMS The Lloydminster Meridian Bo

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January 18, 2006 Wednesday  
FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. A6

**LENGTH:** 493 words

**HEADLINE:** CANDIDATES GRILLED ON AGRICULTURE PLATFORMS

**BYLINE:** BY LARRY FISHER, STAFF WRITER

**BODY:**

Three candidates in the upcoming federal election - including Lloydminster's own incumbent Conservative MP Gerry Ritz - found themselves on the hot seat this past Thursday as grain farmers and cattlemen spent upwards of two hours grilling them on their party's immediate and long-term plans for the Canadian agricultural industry.

Each candidate opened with a three-minute spiel outlining their party's agriculture policy and then the question period got underway as everyday producers and APAS officials cornered the candidates with hard-hitting questions in hopes of obtaining some long-awaited answers.

When the dust finally settled, debate organizers and participants agreed it was well worth their time and effort as roughly 200 people turned out to share their concerns and provide input on the future of agriculture.

"The candidates answered a wide variety of questions and addressed the many issues facing producers on a day-to-day basis," said APAS president Ken McBride, who was in charge of lining up the Saskatoon debate. "A lot of their answers overlapped each other and that was to be expected partially because we knew in advance that there were similarities between the party platforms in regards to agriculture, but the candidates also went toe-to-toe on a couple of issues with the future of the Canadian Wheat Board really standing out."

Ritz and NDP candidate Nettie Wiebe took centre stage butting heads on whether or not changes were necessary to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, with Ritz arguing in favour of producers being given the freedom to market their own wheat and barley, while Wiebe backed the current monopoly saying the open market philosophy would only benefit the large corporate farmers and further hinder those trying to make a go of the small family farm. Liberal hopeful Peter Stroh had little to add to the debate, as he found himself somewhat out of his league on a number of fronts merely taking mental notes from the other two candidates.

"After the first go round the Liberal candidate just started agreeing with everything I said because although he was a decent enough guy he really didn't have a grasp on the past, present or future of agriculture in this country and I wasn't overly shocked by that considering what party he was representing," said Ritz. "Nettie and I managed to agree on some of the more common issues,

CANDIDATES GRILLED ON AGRICULTURE PLATFORMS The Lloydminster Meridian Bo

but the NDP Party in general tends to favour the status quo whereas we see the need for innovation and diversification in all aspects of the agricultural industry.

"All in all I thought the evening went over about as good as it could have. The turnout was decent and the farmers that did take the time to show up had some really constructive questions that were, for the most part, met with some good, well-reasoned answers based on the views of three different parties leading up to the election."

Canadian grain farmers and cattlemen will get the final say when they take to the polls on Jan. 23.

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The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

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**SECTION:** Decision Canada; Pg. C11

**LENGTH:** 583 words

**HEADLINE:** Critics pan Conservative plan

**SOURCE:** Saskatchewan News Network; CanWest News Service

**BYLINE:** Gerry Klein

**DATELINE:** SASKATOON

**BODY:**

SASKATOON -- The Conservative party policy on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) will doom the agency within months of the election, and ignores the democratically expressed wishes of Western farmers, politicians and academics say.

The Conservatives are advocating a dual-market strategy for the CWB but this would spell the end of the 60-year old organization, said both Dick Proctor, the NDP agriculture critic, and Ralph Goodale, the Liberal minister responsible for the agency.

"We (the NDP) think, to market outside of the board, would sound its death knell," Proctor said. "I don't understand why (the Conservatives) would do it, considering their party's position on free votes."

The Conservative position appears to be that it is possible to have a Canadian and non-Canadian function for the board working side by side and "the empirical evidence would suggest, that's not true," Goodale said.

The Conservative position also has Ken Rosaasen, an agriculture economist at the University of Saskatchewan, wondering about Tory tactics.

Ten years ago those concerned with the board were upset with its governance and dictatorial role, but in 1998 the act was changed to make it more democratic, he said. "They are fighting an old battle."

Gerry Ritz, the Conservative candidate for Battleford-Lloydminster and the party's agriculture critic, doesn't believe the board would die if it went to dual marketing, however.

"I'm of the opinion that the board is strong enough to survive in a dual marketing system," he said.

The biggest concern for farmers is the buy-back requirement of the board, that if a farmer wants to mill his own wheat he must buy it back from the CWB, including freight costs, even if it doesn't leave his bin, he said.

And Ritz also has concerns about the federal government dictating to farmers how they should market their grain.

"Farmers should have the option (of deciding the future of the board)."

Although 10 of the 15 board members are now chosen through an election, Ritz would like to see that number pushed up to the total -- including non-farmers who could run, he said.

In an interview with the Western Producer, Ritz added he believed the changes to the board should only come about as a result of a vote through the board of directors or a referendum.

The Conservative party released a policy statement indicating it plans on reviewing and amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act in its first term in office.

"The Conservative party will maintain the (CWB), but will give farmers the ability to sell their grain outside of the agency," the party said in a press release.

Although Rosaasen has been critical of the wheat board over the years, the way it is treated by both the World Trade Organization and the American government should provide evidence that it is working well for Canadian farmers, he said.

The WTO has said that it works within international rules and the Americans continue to fight it because it works so well, he said.

"It may not be perfect, but in an international environment where (Canadian producers have to compete against subsidized producers), it has provided a return for farmers."

Hartley Furtan, another U of S agriculture economist who wrote a major report on the board, said he isn't so sure a dual marketing system would condemn the organization.

But in order for it to survive it would have to be given enough time to adjust in order to be able to compete with other marketing agencies, he said.

**LOAD-DATE:** June 17, 2004