



The Canadian Wheat Board  
La Commission canadienne du blé



September 28, 2006

The Honourable Chuck Strahl, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and  
Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Sir John Carling Building  
930 Carling Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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**Via Facsimile: (613) 995-5621**

Dear Minister Strahl:

Thank you for your letter of September 5<sup>th</sup> extending an invitation to the Canadian Wheat Board to participate in the technical task force that you have assembled to recommend the best way to establish a voluntary CWB.

Specifically, we understand that:

- The membership of the task force is as set out in your September 19<sup>th</sup> news release. Representatives of any of the major farm groups such as, Keystone Agricultural Products, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, Wild Rose Agricultural Products, the National Farmers Union or the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities are absent. Similarly, the Government of Alberta is to be represented but not the Governments of Saskatchewan or Manitoba.
- The task force is to issue its recommendations four weeks from the date of the first meeting. Since we understand that the group's first meeting took place on September 25<sup>th</sup>, we expect the report is due on or about Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- It is your intent is to release the report during the CWB director election.

We understand that your objective is to have a strong and viable CWB that can continue to add value for farmers. However, the reality of a dual market or an open market, as the two terms are synonymous, is that the CWB can no longer be either strong or viable. A CWB or any other entity operating a pooling system in a dual market environment is ineffective and unsustainable. This is particularly the case when the CWB must rely on its competitors to be successful.

The future of the CWB is a matter of great economic importance to the farmers of Western Canada and therefore to the directors of the CWB elected to serve those interests. Obviously there are competing and conflicting visions for that future. The CWB's vision, *Harvesting Opportunity*, was put to farmers for discussion in August. It is premised on the continuance of the single desk, as this is critical to a strong and viable CWB.

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Your government's stated platform is clear -- the single desk system for marketing western Canadian wheat and barley should be dismantled and the task force is to strictly focus on *how* this should be done. *Whether* it should be done is not within the task force's mandate, yet that is the most important issue that farmers will have to decide before any such changes can be introduced.

Under such circumstances we must respectfully decline your invitation to participate as a member of the task force. We believe farmers should have a direct say in the future of their organization, by participating in a plebiscite that offers a fair question, as set out in the *Canadian Wheat Board Act*.

That said, we would be pleased to respond to technical questions that the task force might have during its deliberations. We would ask that the task force provide us with their questions in advance so that we can make the most effective use of our limited time and resources. It will also enable us to discharge our obligation to keep farmers informed of developments in such an important process.

We have previously sought the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to exchange views and engage in a productive dialogue that considers the full range of options open to farmers. As recently as July 31<sup>st</sup> we proposed a full day meeting of you and your staff with our Chair, our CEO and two of our elected directors to discuss and define a process for moving forward. Given this is such a significant issue for farmers, we will take this opportunity to reiterate that invitation and to urge your government to work with us to find a path forward.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Ritter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" and last name "Ritter" clearly distinguishable.

Ken Ritter  
Chair, board of directors

KR/da  
POC1662-CH

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Mr. Ken McBride, President, Agricultural Producers of Saskatchewan, FAX (306) 789-7779  
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