

## Ottawa threatens to fire wheat board CEO

By Larry Kusch and Paul Samyn The Harper government has told Canadian Wheat Board president and CEO Adrian Measner that he will be fired unless he assures Ottawa he will support marketing choice for wheat and barley farmers.

Deanna Allen, a wheat board vice president, said Measner, who has been with the CWB since 1974, received a fax from Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl on Wednesday, indicating that he may be terminated.

Strahl wrote Measner that he had until Dec. 14 to "provide any comments for consideration by me and the Governor-in Council."

Allen said the wording of the letter was nearly identical to a letter sent to former Saskatchewan CWB director Ross Keith recently before he was fired.

"We believe that this is simply pro forma and that following his response by the deadline of the 14th that it will be a matter of hours or days when he will receive notice that he will be terminated."

However, a government spokesman said Thursday the firing is not a done deal, indicating that Measner could save his job if he were to change his position on the need to maintain the wheat board's sales monopoly.

"We're not going to speculate on what he's going to say," the official said, referring to Measner. "We have given him ample opportunity to demonstrate support for marketing choice. We want our appointees to actively support that position."

Measner has been a strong opponent of the government's goal of ending the wheat board's monopoly over wheat and barley sales.

Allen said that Measner was to address wheat board staff Thursday afternoon, adding that he would not be making a public statement that day.

"He's fairly upset and wants to concentrate on talking to staff first," she said.

Allen said that in a conversation with a member of Strahl's staff, she was told that Measner had effectively been given two weeks' notice.

The official said the government already had a short list of candidates to replace Measner, one of five government appointees on the CWB's 15-member board of directors.

Elections by mail are now proceeding in five of 10 wheat board districts. Farmers must postmark their ballots by Friday to have them count.

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