

National Report
Financial Post

No immediate plans to change Wheat Board, Strahl says

Reuters

174 words

8 February 2006

National Post

National

FP6

English

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Canada's new Conservative government is in no hurry to end the **Canadian Wheat Board's** monopoly on marketing Western grain, Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl said yesterday. Mr. Strahl, who is also minister for the **Canadian Wheat Board**, told Reuters, "Nothing will happen in a hurry." Despite the new federal government's stance that the CWB should be voluntary for Western Canadian wheat and barley producers, which would take away its marketing monopoly, the Winnipeg-based organization was not surprised by Mr. Strahl's comment. "I don't know what it means, really. That certainly shows that he's a man of good common sense. We think that anyone who's going to look at the issues in the realistic perspective would come to that conclusion," said CWB spokeswoman Maureen Fitzhenry. The board has not yet scheduled a meeting with Mr. Strahl but plans to work with the new minister during a familiarization period.

Black & White Photo: Chuck Strahl.

Document FINP000020060208e2280006h

CBC.CA News - Full Story :

Ag minister quells Wheat Board worries

Last Updated: Feb 28 2006 05:27 PM CST

Canada's new agriculture minister is reassuring officials with the Canadian Wheat Board that there will be no drastic changes to the Wheat Board's monopoly in the near future.

Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl met with Wheat Board officials in Winnipeg Monday for a meeting board chair Ken Ritter described as friendly and informative.

During the election campaign, the Conservatives said they would dismantle the Wheat Board's marketing monopoly.

Strahl said last week that a dual marketing system is all part of his government's promise to maximize returns to farmers. He insists the federal government has no intention of getting rid of the Wheat Board, but instead wants to offer farmers a choice.

- CBC INDEPTH: [Canadian Wheat Board](#) [See below]

However, Ritter told CBC News he did not get the impression that the move to dismantle the monopoly is on the top of the new Conservative government's agenda.

"It's going to deal with the five major platform issues that were the Conservative party's platform in the campaign, and the Wheat Board was not one of those issues," he said. "[He said] there would be no hasty decisions made, that market stability is paramount, that in the event of any changes, they would only occur after wide consultation with both the board and farmers generally."

Ritter also said he was pleased with how quickly the Conservative government reacted to the dire financial situation many farmers are facing, noting that some farmers have already received money from a grain and oilseed payment approved shortly after the party came to power.