

## Pro-CWB Director Election Campaign, News Release

For immediate release

October 23, 2006

### **Close to 50% of Farmers eligible to vote in Wheat Board elections in District One purged by dictate of Harper Government**

**(Western Canada)** “On behalf of all farmers who support democracy, I’m outraged at the election tampering of the Harper Government. The October 17th directive from federal Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl has removed 48.7% or 2,680 farmers from the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), director election voters’ list in District 1,” states Art Macklin, CWB Director for Northern Alberta and the Alberta and B.C. Peace River country. “Other districts have seen similar interference,” Macklin said.

The unprecedented slashing in the voters list is the result the Minister’s mid-election decision to order the CWB to remove all producers from the list who had no deliveries to the CWB in the last 15 months. The CWB voters’ list is traditionally based the CWB Permit Book list with additions possible by statutory declaration. The election period started on September 5th and concludes December 1st..

“Most farmers rotate their crops and in any one crop year they may not have Board grain (wheat and barley) to market,” said Kyle Korneychuk, a farmer from Pelly, Saskatchewan and the candidate for CWB Director for District 7 (east-central Saskatchewan). “There are many reasons why a producer may have no deliveries to the CWB. Flooding or drought may have caused a crop failure. Bad harvest weather may have resulted in a low quality crop and it was all sold to the non-board domestic feed market. With low world prices in the last crop year, the producer may be holding the crop until the price increases as it has this year. Or they may have been busy harvesting the crop and have not had the time or opportunity to deliver. They could also be a young farmer with his/her very first crop.”

“Farmers do not have to market grain through the CWB to be eligible to vote in the director elections,” explained Macklin. Under the CWB Act, producers have the right to vote if they grew, or had a crop share interest, in one of the six major grains (wheat, barley, oats, rye, canola, rapeseed). It is not limited to CWB grains.”

“If farmers went to the trouble of acquiring a CWB Permit book, it is because they wanted the option of marketing through the CWB and they understood that the actions and decisions of the CWB are important to their farms” said Allen Oberg the CWB Director for District 5 (North-eastern Alberta and northern Saskatchewan.) “In my judgment kicking thousands of farmers off the voters list is a misuse of the Ministerial power under the Act. Now those farmers will have to invest more time and expense to reclaim their democratic right to vote. This also means the election co-ordinator is forced to spend time and farmers’ money dealing with the disruption the directive has caused.”

“Virtually 100% of those who have been removed from the list are farmers who qualify for a vote in this election” stated Macklin. “If they wish to exercise their democratic right to vote, they will now have to take the time, inconvenience, and cost to fill out the statutory declaration, find a Commissioner of Oaths, make a special trip to town to get the document signed; and get this all done before the deadline of November 17th. The time lines may be very tight for producers to secure a ballot. The Election Coordinator will have to contact 16,577 producers by mail. Rural mail delivery to the far corners of the Prairies can be slow and is not on a daily basis. Some farmers pick up their mail on a weekly or an irregular basis and many farmers may be far from home, working on an off farm job.”

“The intent of the CWB Act, is to place the duty on the Minister to make sure CWB elections are fair and credible. By removing eligible voters, the Harper government is doing the opposite,” stated Larry Hill, CWB director for

District 3 (southern Alberta and Saskatchewan). “It is disrupting the smooth running of the election, and making it less representative. There are many producers without permit books who are eligible to vote in the CWB elections and the government should be encouraging them to get a ballot to make the CWB elections as inclusive and democratic as possible”

“There is no excuse for this arbitrary trashing of the democratic rights of farmers in the middle of the election,” concluded Bill Nicholson, CWB Director for District 9 (western and northern Manitoba). “At the initial meeting on Feb.27th, 2006, between Minister Strahl, his Parliamentary Secretary, MP David Anderson, and the CWB Board of Directors, the upcoming CWB director elections were discussed and the Minister acknowledged that any decisions on changes to the rules needed to be made quickly.

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*These farm leaders know that the CWB, with single-desk selling, price pooling, and the new pricing options gives farmers market power, risk management, fairness in the system, and enhanced marketing choices; and the alternative is to let the multinational grain corporations and the railways dictate farmers' marketing choices*

**The following farmers who have had their names removed from the voters' list are prepared to be contacted by media**

Arthur Hadland, Baldonnel, B.C (near Ft. St. John).- grain farmer and seed grower	Telephone	250-789-3566
Marc Soetaert, Grande Prairie, AB.- young, beginning, grain farmer	Telephone	780-766-3837
John Student, Sexsmith, AB.(just north of Grande Prairie) - farms 2200 acres producing wheat, barley, canola, timothy. Family has been farming in the area since 1917	Telephone	780-568-2515
Dale Flavel, Sifton, Sask.-organic farmer	Telephone	306-725-4283

**Note to Editors: If you wish to receive news releases via e-mail, please forward your e-mail address to Ken Larsen at: [Hillfarm@rttinc.com](mailto:Hillfarm@rttinc.com) Please put “Pro-CWB” in the subject line. If you have any problems with this facsimile or questions, please phone me at: 403-746-3463.**

## Backgrounder

### Number of producers removed from the voters list for Canadian Wheat Board 2006 Director elections in Districts 1,3,5,7,9

Compiled by Art Macklin, CWB Director for District 1, Oct. 22, 2006

Below are the numbers of eligible producers who will automatically receive a ballot and the numbers of those who have been disenfranchised and excluded from automatically receiving a ballot due to Agriculture Minister Strahl's mid-election directive of October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The directive ordered a change in the voters list of those who would automatically receive a ballot. Whereas the previous list included all producers who had a Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) permit book, it was the Minister's decision to exclude all those who had no deliveries of grain to the CWB in the 2005/06 crop year and to date in the 2006/07 crop year (the last 15 months). A farmer who is eligible to vote in the CWB elections, as it is stated under the CWB Act is an actual producer who grew any one or more of wheat, barley, oats, rye, canola, rapeseed and flaxseed. As well, a landlord who has a crop share interest in any of these crops is also entitled to a ballot. They are not required to have marketed grain through the CWB in order to be eligible to vote in the Canadian Wheat Board Director election.

	Original voters list	Revised voters list	Removed from voters list	Percentage removed from list
District 1-	5,503	2,823	2,680	48.7%
District 3-	12,460	9,273	3,187	25.27%
District 5-	8,624	5,116	3,508	40.67%
District 7-	11,408	6,568	4,840	42.42%
District 9-	8,023	5,661	2,362	29.44%
Total	46,018	29,441	16,577	36.02%

In order to receive a ballot, those who have been removed from the list will now have to complete a statutory declaration and have it signed by a Commissioner of Oaths. The Statutory Declaration must be returned to the Election Coordinator by November 17, 2006.

**Note to Media** A copy of the Statutory Declaration and the relevant sections of the CWB Act can be sent to any that are interested by return e-mail.