

What about wishes of growers?

Dear editor:

Regarding the federal government position on the CWB and Bill C-300

I would like to express concern over the attempt to amend legislation (Bill C-300) in order to remove the single desk selling authority of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Honourable Chuck Strahl has stated that the government's position is that "western grain farmers deserve the freedom to make their own marketing decisions".

I would ask, do the majority of western grain producers support this legislation, or is it just a few farmers who have moved this proposal forward? Single desk selling has similar characteristics to supply management and I know of a few farmers who actively pursue the right to market milk outside of Dairy Farmers of Ontario. Do they also deserve the same freedom to make their own marketing decisions?

As a supporter of supply management I become concerned when a government moves illegally to undermine an organization by amending founding legislation – in order to change a monopoly, to a free choice marketing system. Bill C-300 sounds like a strategy born of a Free Trade/Charter of Rights advocate rather than a Minister of Agriculture whose mandate is to ensure that Canadian Agriculture remains viable into the next generation. The strength of our organized marketing boards is our best defense against domination and control of our markets by American interests and large multinationals.

I fear that our government's support for supply managed agricultural organizations is becoming only words – managed marketing must be backed up by sound policies and border controls with teeth.

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