

Canada Wheat Board CEO says Ottawa gave him notice
By Roberta Rampton

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, Nov 30 (Reuters) - The head of the Canadian Wheat Board told staff at the grain marketing agency on Thursday that he has received notice that he will be fired by Ottawa as of Dec. 14, a wheat board vice-president said.

Adrian Measner, a 30-year veteran of the CWB who has led the agency since 2003, met with staff to tell them he received a letter from Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl on Wednesday that will result in his termination, Deanna Allen said. "He has received what I would call the first step that would result in his removal from the board," Allen said in an interview.

The Canadian Wheat Board, one of the world's largest grain marketers, holds a monopoly on sales of wheat and barley from the Prairies to millers, maltsters and export markets.

A spokesman for Strahl said the government has not fired Measner from his appointed position, but has asked him to clarify his position on the Conservative government's plan to end the CWB's marketing monopoly.

"The government needs to be confident that its appointees will actively support the government's position when it comes to marketing choice," Conrad Bellehumeur told Reuters. The minister has not yet received a response from Measner, said Bellehumeur, who declined to discuss what action Ottawa would take if Measner does not support the government's plan.

Measner is a vocal supporter of retaining the monopoly, and has said the wheat board cannot survive without it. He has publicly criticized the Conservative government's campaign to change the wheat board's powers, going as far as to call the process "un-Canadian."

The United States and European Union have said the CWB's monopoly and government financial guarantees distort the international grain trade, claims that Ottawa has routinely dismissed.