



Provincial wheat commissions sign MOU to collaborate on continued support for variety development and the Canadian International Grains Institute when WCD sunsets July 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Calgary, Alberta) Tuesday, January 10, 2017 – Today, the Alberta Wheat Commission, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission and the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association announced they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to absorb the responsibilities and financial obligations of the Western Canadian Deduction (WCD). This collaborative agreement will further support and strengthen variety development and market support initiatives with the goal of improving net returns for western Canadian wheat producers.

“The three western provincial wheat commissions are now well established and have the ability to absorb the funding obligations of the WCD,” said Bill Gehl, Chair of the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission. “This will mean greater efficiency and will lead to more producer dollars being spent on important research, variety development and market development activities.”

The WCD, which will automatically sunset on July 31, 2017, was established by the Government of Canada on August 1, 2012, replacing the previous check-off that was administered by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). The WCD of \$0.48 per tonne is applied to all sales of wheat delivered to licensed grain buyers in Western Canada. The WCD was established as a transitional levy to ensure continued support for the development of new wheat varieties by public breeding institutions and market support activities at the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi), which were previously funded by the CWB check-off.

“This MOU signifies that all three crop commissions are committed to working together to provide continuity for the important functions provided by the organizations currently receiving transitional funding from the WCD,” said Kevin Auch, Chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission.

Ratifying an MOU formally confirms the commitment and focus that the crop commissions have to sustaining funding for the technical support and education services that Cigi provides to the wheat value chain and its customers, and core wheat breeding activities currently being funded through the WCD via the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF).

“We are all committed to ensuring continuity in Western Canada’s public breeding programs through stable funding and a collaborative approach, and committed to ensuring core funding for Cigi’s customer support activities will remain in place,” added Fred Greig, Chair of the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association.

The commissions will be working together to set variety development priorities and funding commitments at or above the current levels funded through the WCD. Through the funding support, the commissions will also have greater involvement in the governance of Cigi, including oversight on Cigi's strategic direction and business plan.

Western Canadian farmers currently have two wheat check-offs on their grain cash ticket – the provincial check-off and the WCD. The three commissions have each stated their intention to their members to move to a single wheat check-off in their respective jurisdictions and absorb the responsibilities and financial obligations of the WCD. Each organization is also pursuing levy payer approval and the appropriate provincial regulatory requirements to adjust their levy collection systems to provide a seamless administrative transition on July 31, 2017.

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