



February 2014 Annual Meeting Edition

**A Message From Council**

Another successful annual meeting was held on January 29 and 30, 2014, filled with solid content that will serve those who attended very well. The Theme of the CWB Alliance Annual meeting was: "Charting the Future : Grains Policy, Farm Organizations, Commodity Commission, Where to for the CWB Alliance."

The Annual meeting provided an opportunity for members to reflect on the activities of the Alliance and to assess the Alliance's mandate and communications. Meeting participants heard reports on such issues as the CWB class action, and the potential impact of Bill C-18, the so called "Agricultural Growth Act". We were please that representatives of the Saskatchewan Barley and Wheat commissions along with representation from Alberta and Manitoba were able to provide a perspective on commodity commissions and associations.

A highlight of the Annual meeting was a presentation by Dr. Ron DePauw, Senior Principle Wheat Breeder, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. Dr. DePauw was responsible for the development of AC Barrie. His presentation focused on Canada's world class plant breeding program.

This newsletter is specifically dedicated to providing members with a summary of the annual meeting. We hope you will share it with your neighbours and on coffee row.



Above - left to right conference participants Jan Slomp (NFU President), Rob Cowan CWB Alliance Councillor, Ian Robson Alliance member



Above - left to right conference participants Larry Bohdanovich, Murray Heidelbaugh and Ken Larsen,

**Annual Meeting and Conference Highlights**

The Annual meeting is an opportunity to report to members on past years activities and to chart the course for the next year. On Behalf of Alliance Council, Chair Bill Gehl presented the report.

**THE REPORT TO MEMBERS:**

**- Meeting with Members of Parliament**

The Alliance took advantage of opportunities to meet with members of parliament, Malcolm Allen (NDP Agriculture Critic) and Wayne Easter (Liberal Public Safety Critic). The meetings allowed the Alliance to update these politicians on the true impact of the Harper government's policies including the cuts to Canada's internationally respected plant breeding program. In both cases



Left, **Cam Goff** elected chair Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission  
Right, **Bill Gehl** elected chair Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

these MPs noted the difficulty in regaining the "single desk". Each citing trade deals signed off by the federal government as roadblocks to reinstating the "single desk".

**- Communications:**

Council pointed out that the Alliance's communication is multi-dimensional which includes: news releases, website, newsletters, Farm Progress Show display and public meetings. The Farm Progress Show provided an opportunity to survey farmers on hot button issues. Though it was a straw poll, it provided some insight into what grain producers are thinking. It will be interesting to find out farmer opinion on the new realities of the open market at the next Farm Progress Show scheduled for June.

The Alliance fully supports the Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board "Leave No Farmer Behind" class action. It is about holding the Harper / Ritz Conservatives to account. It is about making sure the voting public remains fully reminded of how Harper and Ritz steam rolled over farmers with total disregard for democratic principles.

Council reminded conference participants of the successes this past year, highlighted by the elections of Saskatchewan Barley Commission and Saskatchewan Wheat Commission candidates that the Alliance supported. As well the Alliance welcomed the success of Larry Bohdanovich who gained a seat on the Manitoba Canola Growers Association and Derick Dewar who has taken a seat on the Saskatchewan Mustard Development Commission.

At the 2013 AGM three resolutions were passed:

**1) Inquiry into the disposal of CWB historical records.** The Alliance followed up but apparently there was nothing that can be done as there is some confusion whether National Archives has jurisdiction over the CWB.

**HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN  
THE CWB ALLIANCE FOR 2014?  
IF NOT - NOW IS THE TIME**

**2) Distribution of a successful class action award.**

This message was passed on to the Friends. We expect that this will be followed up by them in event of the courts awarding damages to farmers.

**3) Farmer controlled marketing structure.** A committee was struck and will explore options as they may emerge.

**REPORT ON [www.cwbafacts.ca](http://www.cwbafacts.ca)**

"Six hundred visitors per month for the last twelve months with each visitor averaging two pages is a very good rate", said Ken Larsen who administers the site.

Ken report on the website topics most visited such as, "One year after the CWB", and "Constitutional Class Action". As for blogs, some of the most visited were "Medicine Hat flour mill killed by Ritz", "Where did the protein go?", and "Farmers Celebrate International Women's Day" The website resource page and the media page also received considerable visitor attention. Though individuals are not identified, it is noteworthy that they came from such internet servers as: Canadian House of Commons, Alberta Public Works, Government of Canada, Agriculture and Agri- Food Canada, and Government of Saskatchewan. These servers accessed the Alliance website from a minimum of twice a month to every second day.

Apparently the provincial governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan along with the Government of Canada see it as important to keep up to date on the opinions expressed by the Alliance.

The Alliance's blog as a forum for discussion of current issues has garnered many friends. "Over the past year our blog was followed by around 200 people per day with 48,000 friends", said Ken Larsen.

It should be no surprise if in 2015 we witness an increase in traffic on the Alliance website, especially as we see a growing crisis in rail transportation, drop in grain prices, little or no protein premiums and a federal election scheduled for October 2015.

### **CHARTING THE FUTURE FOR THE CWB ALLIANCE**

With the changes that are occurring in the grains industry it became important to assess the direction of the Alliance. This took place by first reviewing how other not for profit organizations function in the age of the internet and smart phones. We were pleased to have Simon Enoch, Director, Saskatchewan office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives present on the topic, "**Organizing, Communicating and Fundraising in the 21st Century**". Simon holds a PhD in Communications and is therefore acquainted with how organizations have adapted to the 21st century social environment. Simon outlined the evolution of organizations. From the 1940's to the 60's he said that these "first generation organizations focused on face to face communications between members with promotion through public events". In the 70's through to the 90's communications were primarily mail based or telephone. Advocacy organizations relied on letters to politicians, and newspapers.

This brings us to the 21st century where we have seen the dominance of the electronic medium. Communication is primarily "on-line", including on-line petitions and user submitted content. To be effective requires interaction with supporters thus creating attachment and subsequently a "stake" in the organization.

In applying Simon's presentation to the Alliance it would appear that it is important to focus on a variety of communication methods. This would confirm that our approach is workable in that we use both current communications elements e.g. electronic, as well as long standing methods such as newsletters, media releases, petitions, and in public meetings.

### **CWB Alliance: A review of mandate and structure**

The annual meeting also served as an opportunity to review **The Alliance's Statement of Purpose**. To that end the statement of purpose was reviewed and updated to reflect the current farming environment.

The presentation by Simon and the review of the Alliance Mandate statement was followed by a

group discussion. The discussion was focused on the direction of the Alliance. In the assessment, it was generally agreed that the way the organization is structured ought to remain as is, inclusive of locally based committees. It was felt that it would be premature to make any changes prior to the resolution of the "Leave No Farmer Behind" class action. There was also concurrence on the name. It was observed that as the impact of the loss of the 'single desk' becomes even more apparent the name CWB Alliance may have even greater meaning. It is a reminder to the community of what has been lost.

### **REPORT ON THE "LEAVE NO FARMER BEHIND CLASS ACTION"**

Stewart Wells outlined the progression of the various court actions launched by the Friends of the CWB. He particularly reminded annual meeting participants of the promise made by Minister Gerry Ritz in 1998. He had stated: "If farmers want to remove some type of grain from the CWB's current single-desk system, that can be done - subject to three conditions:

- 1) the directors must recommend it
- 2) the Canadian Grain Commission must approve an identity
- 3) If the proposed 'exclusion' is significant there must be a vote among farmers to approve it"

Stewart stated that the court actions were necessary to hold the government to their policy commitment. He said there was success along the way, for example defending farmers' right to maintain barley under the 'single desk'. "This resulted in more than \$500 million in farmers' pockets", said Stewart.

There have been few victories to celebrate lately. The most recent and disturbing decision was when Justice Trembley-Lamer in the Federal Court of Appeal struck out most of the Friends' class action claim. The Friends though are not bowed. "It is important to hold the Harper / Ritz duo to account for the damage they have done to farmers bottom line." It is the principle of the matter, it is about farmers' right to have determined the future of the CWB and with the loss of the 'single desk' to be

compensated for the money and assets that were confiscated. "We therefore have appealed this latest court decision", concluded Stewart.

### **Bill C-18 and UPOV 91, code words for the transfer of wealth from farmers to seed companies**

Jan Slomp, president of the National Farmers Union, reviewed the impact of the Bill C-18 "The Agriculture Growth Act". The Bill amends numerous federal statutes including Plant Breeders rights legislation, the Canada Seeds Act, and in so doing aligns federal legislation with UPOV 91.

UPOV 91 stands for International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. It is an international agreement. It allows for the collection of "end point" royalties, and extends this royalty protection from 18 to 20 years. Over the years, seed companies have pressed the federal government to adopt UPOV 91 for it will be a cash cow for the multi-national seed companies.

UPOV 91 gives the holder of plant breeders rights (PBR) the exclusive right to produce, reproduce, condition, and import or export propagating material on the variety that they hold plant breeders rights. It was pointed out in the discussion that "conditioning seed" includes cleaning. This could lead to the demise of private or community based seed cleaning operations. Under the previous agreement called UPOV 78 farmers had the right to store seed. Now under UPOV 91 and Bill C-18 that legal "right" has now been downgraded to a "privilege". Therefore storing or binning the seed is subject to the approval of the plant breeders rights.

The PBR holder retains the right to limit the amount of seed kept to reflect the acres the farmer in question is going to seed, and the right to charge royalties. "The privilege clause is therefore absolutely hollow", concluded Jan Slomp.

Yet the federal government insists on stating that farm saved seed remains in place. The concern here is that by regulation this can be removed. Secondly, it only exists if the farmer does not sign away that right to the given seed company. Canola producers and also Ontario corn producers know

how this has all played out. In these cases, royalty rates have turned into a significant cost to producers. So though Minister Ritz gives assurances, there is no guarantee that farmers will be able to save seed.

The National Farmers Union has launched an alternative "Farmers' Seed Act. As well, they have launched a petition on the right of farmers to save seed.

### **The Challenges of Plant Breeding: From Cultivar to Commercialization**



Dr. Ron DePauw, (Senior principle wheat breeder, Swift Current) Dr. DePauw introduced his topic by stating that wheat sales contribute \$5.5 billion annually to the Canadian economy and \$7.5 billion in value added. He further stated that 95% of wheat production is in western Canada and by including durum represents about 40% of prairie field crop production.

He spoke of the goals of farmers versus the goals of the consumer. Farmers want yield, disease and insect protection, and price. The consumer on the other hand wants wheat that is nutritious, safe, capable of long storage at home, with minimal cooking time and effort at minimum price.

Dr. DePauw outlined the breeding process from germplasm to commercialization and varietal registration process. He especially drew attention to the success of Canada's wheat breeding program. Prior to 1991 yields for CWRS (Canada Western Red Spring Wheat) rose at a rate of about .33% per year. From the 1990's to now, the yields rose by

approximately .7%. "This doubling of genetic gain was due to farmer investment in wheat breeding that enabled breeding programs to double in size: observed Dr. DePauw. He also noted that Richard Gray's 2012 study showed a return on Western Grain Research Foundation investment of 36% for all wheat.

Though it is often reported that Canola has made great gains, Dr. DePauw pointed out that for the period 1981/82 to 2012/13 spring wheat increased at a rate of .39 bushel per acre whereas for the same period canola increased at a rate of .38 bushels per year. "This shows that wheat yields have increased at a slightly faster pace than canola as reported in provincial statistics for the period" said Dr. DePauw.

In conclusion Dr. DePauw stated:

". Agriculture Canada's cultivars have met consumer preferences for safe and nutritious food, met processor specifications and performed in the field.

. Cultivars are registered to have value for both cultivation and use

. Concurrent assessments under the Canada Seeds Act and the Canada Grains Act increases efficiency and reduces business risk

. Public investment in wheat has a high rate of return on investment"

**(www.cwbafacts for the PowerPoint presentation)**

### **COMMODITY COMMISSIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

The elections to the Saskatchewan Wheat and Barley Development Commissions resulted in a number of board members that supported CWB Alliance principles of farm saved seed, maximizing returns to farmers and transparency. With this success, it was time to review how the various commodity commissions operate.

### **Provincial Commodity Commissions & Associations (What are they all about?)**

The Alliance invited Laura Larsen, a PhD candidate specializing in agricultural history at the University of Saskatchewan, to provide an overview of selected commissions established by legislation in each of the three Prairie Provinces.

Laura observed that there were four commodity based organizations established in this "post CWB single-desk" period. These are the Alberta Wheat Commission, the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, and the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission.

Commissions are legislated by provincial governments. In Alberta commissions operate under *The Marketing of Agricultural Products Acts*, Saskatchewan commissions are under *The Agri-Food Act*, and Manitoba commissions are under *The Farm Products Marketing Act*.

The Alberta Grain Commission was formed in 1972 but did not collect a check-off. It was not a true commodity commission although it strongly supported the creation of check-off collecting commodity commissions. The first commission in Alberta was the Alberta Canola Producers Commission formed in 1989. Formed in 1991, the Alberta Barley Commission has become one of the most high profile commissions in the Prairie Provinces.

"Commissions rely on check-offs (sometimes referred to as levies) for financing research, market development and policy development about the commodity."

Barley, wheat, canola, and pulse check-offs are refundable in the three prairie provinces. The only exception is the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers whose members voted for a non-refundable check-off when it was formed. Commission check-offs range from \$1.00/tonne to a low of 50 cents /tonne.

There is also a "prairie-wide Western Canadian Deduction that is split between the Western Grains Research Foundation, Canadian International Grains Institute, and the Canadian Malt Barley Technical Centre," said Laura. These deductions are 48 cents/tonne for wheat in all three Prairie Provinces, and for barley producers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan 56 cents. Alberta barley producers have a 4 cent/tonne check-off which is allocated

exclusively to the Canadian Malt Barley Technical Centre.

The powers of the various commodity commissions or associations are quite similar according to Laura. They are as follows:

- 1) Intended to focus on research, education, and market development
- 2) Requiring producers and processors to provide information related to production, marketing and processing if necessary
- 3) Requiring persons other than producers to be licensed before engaging in marketing, processing or both processing and marketing
- 4) Collecting service charges, check-offs, and refunding of such, and the legal power to collect charges and check-offs
- 5) Borrow money

In the case of the new Saskatchewan commissions there are additional conditions:

- 1) Loans cannot exceed 10% of current assets
- 2) Commissions cannot regulate or control in any way production, marketing or production and marketing of the commodity

The structure of the commissions varies. Saskatchewan directors are elected through a province wide vote while directors for The Alberta Wheat Commission are elected at 5 regional meetings as well as a one director-at-large being elected.

### **Farm Progress Show June 18 to 20, 2014**



The CWB Alliance will, for a third year, have a booth at the Farm Progress Show. Drop by the booth complete the our survey and enter your name in the prize draw.

### **The Canadian Wheat Board Alliance is doing great work on your behalf.**

#### **We need to keep you informed.**

HOWEVER, it is becoming impossible to communicate by regular mail, due to the rapidly escalating cost of postage. **We therefore need your email address so we can reduce costs.**

In the future, we must limit the number of mailed newsletters, and rely more heavily on electronic mail, which costs us very little in comparison. We can then keep you up-to-date on the work of your council and make sure you are informed on the issues that arise each week. A case in point is the attempt, by the current federal government to pass Bill C-18 which has the effect of giving away the farmers' right to save their own seed.

#### **IF YOU READ THAT LAST LINE, AND SAID**

**“WHAT”**, then you need to get on board with the CWBA and allow us to get this information out, and encourage your participation, so we can work on behalf of all farmers.

Please send us your email address so we can let you know what's going on, in a timely fashion.

By using email, our limited resources, provided by your membership fees and donations can be used more effectively, to challenge government and industry, rather than being gobbled up by Canada Post.

If you do not have access to a computer or email, then ask a family member or neighbour if we can send it to them, and they can print it and get it over to you.

**Give us your email address by sending an email to the CWB Alliance Secretary Darrell Stokes:**

**His email address is [folks@magtech.ca](mailto:folks@magtech.ca)**

**Along with your full name, also provide your address so that we can cross reference with our membership and contact information.**

## CWB ALLIANCE PUBLIC MEETING

**DATE:** SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH,

**TIME:** 1:00 TO 4:00

**LOCATION:** ELKS HALL, RAYMORE, SASKATCHEWAN

**speakers:** Cam Goff, Chair Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission

Bill Gehl, Chair Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

Stuart Wells, update on the Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board class action

Malcolm Allen, Member of Parliament : Agriculture Critic, New Democratic Party

Ralph Goodale, Member of Parliament: Deputy Leader, Liberal Party of Canada

**COME TO THE MEETING AND FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON!**

THE OPPOSITION HAS NO TROUBLE FINANCING THEIR AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS TO RESHAPE AGRICULTURE TO SUIT THEIR CORPORATE FRIENDS, BECAUSE THEY SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE IN THE ON-GOING EFFORT TO RESHAPE AGRICULTURE POLICY AND PROGRAMS AND COMPLETELY FAVOUR THE CORPORATE SECTOR.

It takes time and effort to promote candidates during an election. The CWB Alliance plans to support candidates for commodity commissions and associations in the Prairie provinces. We have already had some success in that a majority of candidates that support farm saved seed were elected to the Saskatchewan Wheat Development and the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commissions. They have already made their mark in that these two commissions have made it clear that in the issue of variety registration system to remain as is with as little changes as possible. It is a matter that if it is not broke, don't fix it. Dr. DePauw's presentation at our annual meeting certainly pointed that out. Finally keep on mind that the present disastrous performance of the CN and CP is a direct result of the loss of the single desk.

**You can help by:**

Renewing your 2014 membership \$ 100.00

Providing a donation to the CWB Alliance for:

- General operations such as publishing , website, etc: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan Commission elections fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Friends of the CWB "Leave no Farmer Behind Class Action": \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**CWB ALLIANCE COUNCIL HAS SET THE DATE FOR THE 2015 ANNUAL MEETING.**

**IT WILL TAKE PLACE ON FEB. 6TH AND 7TH, 2015**

**COUNCIL HAS ALSO SET ALTERNATIVE DATES OF FEB. 21 AND 22.**

**MAKE SURE TO MARK OFF BOTH DATES IF AT ALL POSSIBLE**

FEBRUARY 2015						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					CWBA ANNUAL MEETING	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
					CWBA AGM ALTERNATE DATES	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

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Calendars Michel Zbinden

### BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ALLIANCE

I am applying for / renewing my membership in the Canadian Wheat Board Alliance (CWBA), and hereby confirm that:

- I support the orderly marketing of grain through price pooling, the single desk, as modeled in the Canadian Wheat Board Act (RSC 1985)
- I support the Canada Grain Act and the independent regulatory role of the Canadian Grain Commission that functions in the interest of farmers
- **I support the right of farmers to save seed**
- I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the CWBA as democratically established by the members.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_ Committee: \_\_\_\_

**Please Print**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership: \$ **(Annual)** 100.00 **(Please Circle One)** NEW / RENEWAL

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **(Thanks for your support)**

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and your cheque to: Canadian Wheat Board Alliance, Box 125. Hussar AB T0J 1S0

**Please check the box if you would like to be mailed a formal receipt**

Thank you for your contribution to the fight for your rights