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## Minister Strahl Announces Barly Plebiscite Question

By: Press Release

1/21/2007 --

OTTAWA, Ontario, ñ The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, announced today the question that will be asked in the upcoming plebiscite on the marketing of barley in Western Canada and the criteria for voter eligibility.

ñCanadaís New Government believes Western grain farmers should have the choice on how they market their grain while preserving a strong, viable, yet voluntary Wheat Board,í said Minister Strahl. ñFarmers have told us that they want to be consulted on this issue ñ and that is exactly what we are delivering. I look forward to what they have to say so I encourage all those eligible to vote to do so.í

The question on the ballot will be:

The Canadian Wheat Board should retain the single desk for the marketing of barley into domestic human consumption and export markets.

I would like the option to market my barley to the Canadian Wheat Board or any other domestic or foreign buyer.

The Canadian Wheat Board should not have a role in the marketing of barley.

Canadaís New Government campaigned openly during the last election on providing marketing choice for Western grain producers. We are delivering on that commitment, and moving forward in an orderly and transparent fashion. Canadaís New Government believes that Western grain farmers take all the risks and make all the investments and therefore deserve the chance to seek out the best possible return that makes good business sense to them ñ whether selling to the Board or outside of it.

In order to be eligible to vote, farmers must have produced grain in 2006 and must have produced barley in at least one of the past five years (2002-2006). Farmers who do not meet this first criterion but who are active farmers will be able to be included on the votersí list upon declaration of their extenuating circumstances if they had planned to produce a grain crop in 2006 but were unable to do so. Those eligible farmers who have not received a ballot by February 8, 2007 should contact the election coordinator, KPMG at 1-888-3BARLEY (1-888-322-7539) and arrangements will be made to send them a declaration form and ballot.

To help producers make an informed decision, three independent specialists in the field; Dr. Murray Fulton, from the University of Saskatchewan; Rolf Penner, from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy; and Dr. Barry Cooper, from the University of Calgary; have been retained to write a short, objective description of each question, which will be provided in the package sent to producers.

Each farm in the CWB-designated zone, whether a single producer, a partnership or a corporation, will be eligible for one vote.

KPMG, will commence mailing ballots to eligible producers on January 31 and the last day for return ballots to be postmarked will be March 6. Results of the plebiscite will be announced in mid-March.

For more information on the plebiscite, please visit [www.2007barleyvote.ca](http://www.2007barleyvote.ca).

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As a grower would you invest in a biodiesel plant? What type of a grower participation program would you like to see in terms of incentives or tax breaks? *Alberta farmer*

**Al Scholz**



This is a very good question. Biofuels are a global growth industry for economic, environmental, energy security reasons. Canada is late to the table and has been slow in determining the role of bio-fuels as environmental and economic drivers.

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**Larry Martin**



I would be very skeptical. I would want to see some very good internal rates of return from a capital budgeting model, and especially, extreme and realistic assumptions about the risks. This is in part because every time there has been a panacea, lots of people have lost lots of money. And I would be even more nervous about ethanol.

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**Dick Wittman**



Al Scholz and Larry Martin both provide thought provoking answers. Let me approach this from a slightly different angle.

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For more information on marketing choice, please visit [www.agr.gc.ca/cwb](http://www.agr.gc.ca/cwb).

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