



I.D.E.A. Industry Update - January 3, 2003

I.D.E.A. Fourth Annual General Meeting and Conference

Plans for the I.D.E.A. Fourth Annual General Meeting and Conference are underway. Our format will be similar to last year, with a host reception just prior to the CAAR convention on February 10, 2003, followed by our Annual General Meeting and Conference on February 11, 2003. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. *The agenda and registration information will be available shortly.*

Alberta Wheat and Barley Test Marketing Act Set to Challenge CWB

On January 1, 2003 the Alberta Wheat and Barley Test Marketing Act (Bill 207) officially came into force. The passage of the Act is the result of the efforts of Calgary Mountain View MLA Mark Hlady. He sponsored the private member's bill partly in response to a 1995 plebiscite of Alberta wheat and barley farmers. The vote indicated majority support for a dual marketing system providing farmers with the freedom to sell their wheat or barley either through the Canadian Wheat Board or on the open market.

In a recent press release issued by the Western Barley Growers Association, President Albert Wagner confirmed the group's support for the Bill. "We have always worked for a vibrant and self-sustaining agriculture in western Canada. The CWB monopoly has continued to be an impediment to that goal, but Bill 207 presents an opportunity, therefore we will work to ensure it is fully implemented."

The Bill's passage gives authority to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to enter into an agreement with the appropriate Minister of the Federal Government or the CWB (or both) to establish an open market on a test basis, for the purchase and sale of wheat and barley produced in Alberta. The test market would continue for a minimum of ten years.

In an interview on December 18, 2002 Hlady confirmed that a letter has been sent to Ralph Goodale, the Minister responsible for the CWB, requesting his support to allow Alberta to establish the test market. According to Hlady, if Goodale rejects the request, the next step will be a constitutional challenge. The full text of the Act is available at www.assembly.ab.ca.

FarmGro in Receivership

FarmGro Organic Foods Inc. of Regina is in receivership. Established in 2000, FarmGro has promoted itself as "North America's largest fully dedicated organic flour mill and seed cleaning plant." The Receiver, Sullivan and Associates of Regina, continues to run the company and it is still licenced and bonded by the Canadian Grain Commission. The Receiver wants to sell the company as a going concern, rather than selling the pieces. FarmGro was initially financed through a share offering and provincial government funding. Saskatchewan's Crown Investment Corporation is an investor and has loans to the company.

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