



## COMMENTARY

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### **For immediate release**

October 18, 2011

## KAP on the CWB Debate

*By Doug Chorney, KAP President - Cell: 785-3626*

The future of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) and the Government of Canada's decision to remove its single desk marketing structure continues to be the paramount issue affecting Prairie farmers this fall. Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) has strived to take a balanced approach in dealing with this issue while using our official policy positions as guidelines.

Our membership, a diverse group of intelligent and opinionated farmers, has always been split on the issue of the CWB. As a result, KAP has always had the unenviable task of balancing opposing views while fighting for what is in the best interest of Prairie farmers as a whole. We know that the approach we have taken has not satisfied some members on both sides of the argument. Amazingly, we have managed to be called puppets of both our provincial NDP government and the federal Conservative government in the same week. We however have refused to give into pressure to support one side over the other.

We have a fair and democratic resolution process through which our organization's policies are debated and set. In 2006 at our October General Council meeting, the KAP delegate body made our position clear—that the federal government should hold a plebiscite of Western Canadian grain farmers to determine the fate of the CWB's single desk mandate. This past spring, the federal government made its intentions regarding the CWB clear. On June 13, 2011 we publically stated our policy position and we have continued to work with our federal counterparts at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to move it forward.

We are however not naive and we recognize that the federal government has every intention of changing the legislation governing the CWB without a plebiscite. In light of this fact, this past July our organization passed policy instructing us to move forward with the development of a strategy to ensure that non-marketing services currently provided by the CWB are still available in an open market environment. This is not a passive acceptance of government policy; rather it provides us with an opportunity to address changes and protect farmer interests while government moves its agenda forward. We believe this to be a balanced and reasonable approach to this highly political and emotional debate.

We have learned through years of working successfully with various governments of all ideologies that political grandstanding on an issue yields absolutely no results. There

are other organizations that have chosen to go down this path and the only success they will claim is growing the divisions within our agricultural community.

Starting in November, we will be hosting our annual district meetings across the province and we strongly encourage all members to come out and provide us with constructive feedback on how we have dealt with this challenge. Our grassroots membership base is the greatest strength of our organization and we will continue to rely on input from farmers throughout the province to direct us in our work.

*Keystone Agricultural Producers is Manitoba's largest general farm policy organization, representing over 7,000 farm families and 22 commodity groups throughout the province. Our strength is our democratic structure, and our mission is to represent and promote the interests of the province's farm families.*