

The Wheat Grower

May 2015

From the President, Levi Wood



The importance of the Wheat Grower voice

I am often asked by the media if the Wheat Growers still have relevance in today's agricultural policy world. Many assume that, with the CWB monopoly battle behind us, that there isn't really a need for the Wheat Growers. In my experience, nothing could be further from the truth.

I look at the issues we face today, and realize there's a vital need for a strong voice representing farmers who embrace innovation and free enterprise. Here are some of the issues at the top of our agenda these days:

- Grain transportation and the need for measures that will increase railway competition, capacity and service;
- Labour shortages and the need for access to foreign workers;
- Expanding market opportunities through trade agreements and by minimizing the impact of technical trade barriers;
- Streamlining the variety registration process so we encourage greater private investment and gain faster access to new wheat varieties;
- Changes to Canadian Grain Commission grading so that more of our grain is

bought on a spec basis, using objective quality tests, rather than subjective visual assessments.

These are just a few of the issues the Wheat Growers are tackling. Admittedly, it sometimes takes a while for our policy efforts to bear fruit. The CWB monopoly is of course the most obvious example, but there are others. For example, the Wheat Growers started calling for an increase in the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption to \$1 million back in 2010. Five years later, that has become a reality.

Another policy change made several years ago that is now paying dividends is the elimination of Kernel Visual Distinguishability (KVD) as a registration criteria for new wheat varieties. Too few seem to remember that it was the Wheat Growers that were the driving force for this change for years, if not decades.

The point I'm trying to make is that you won't always see immediate benefits from the policy changes we advocate. It often takes years to convince governments of the value of the policy solutions we bring to the table.

Policy issues come and go. But one thing you can count on is that the Wheat Growers will always be at the forefront, leading the charge for positive change.

As well, I want to pay special tribute to Wally Nelson, who will be inducted later this year into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. Wally was the first President of the Wheat Growers and held that position for five years, laying the foundation for a policy organization that remains as committed as ever to improving the profitability of our farms. Congratulations Wally!

I want to wish everyone a successful spring, and am looking forward to seeing everyone at our Farm Progress Show BBQ on June 17. As always please RSVP in advance, but feel free to share this information with anyone who is, was, or should be a Wheat Grower Member!

As a final reminder, our 2016 convention will coincide with the Commodity Classic in New Orleans, next March. It's a great chance to take advantage of an excellent Ag trade show combined with our convention lineup. Please mark your calendar now to join us in the Big Easy!

Meet your President

Levi Wood, age 30, farms with his dad Jim at Pense, SK, just west of Regina. They also operate an aerial spraying and crop inputs business.

Levi has a Commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan and an MBA from the University of British Columbia. He returned to farming in 2007 after previous work as a foreign exchange trader.

Levi is a member of the Saskatchewan government's Youth Economic Engagement Council.

Levi's grandfather John was a founding director of the Palliser Wheat Growers, forerunner to the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association.

Wheat Growers in Action

- On January 28 and 29, Director Kenton Possberg met with government officials in Ottawa, including Bev Shipley, Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, to discuss our concerns about accessing foreign workers. Kenton is representing the western grain sector as a member of a national Labour Task Force that has been involved in developing the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Workforce Action Plan.

- At the end of January, President Levi Wood travelled to Washington, DC to attend the annual joint winter meeting of the National Association of Wheat Growers and the U.S. Wheat Associates. Levi was asked to give the Canadian perspective on a number of policy issues including grain transportation, cross-border trade, our variety registration system and the global initiative (led by Canada) to develop trade protocols regarding the low-level presence of GMO seeds in international grain shipments.

- On February 3 in Ottawa Jim Wickett, Chair of the Wheat Growers, made a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, regarding Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act. Jim spoke strongly in favour of the changes that would update Canada's Plant Breeders' Rights legislation and help pave the way for increased private investment in the breeding of new wheat varieties.

- On February 11, USA Today published an article written by Cheryl Nagel applauding the Girl Scouts of America for standing up for science and rejecting calls by activists for its cookies to be made from non-GMO ingredients.

- During the week of February 22, Kenton Possberg and other members of the Labour Task Force met with government officials and politicians

Join us in the Big Easy!

Wheat Growers 46th Annual Convention

New Orleans, Louisiana

March 1 to 5, 2016

The Wheat Growers are pleased to invite you to attend our 46th annual general meeting and convention, to be held March 1 to 3 in New Orleans. Our convention will be held just ahead of the Commodity Classic farm show, which is being held March 3 to 5 in New Orleans.

The convention will kick-off with the President's reception at 7:00 pm on March 1 and will close with our banquet on the evening of March 3. Guests will then be invited to attend the Commodity Classic. A number of tours and events are planned, including a Wheat Grower riverboat cruise on the evening of March 2.

For details on the Commodity Classic, please visit:
<http://www.commodityclassic.com/home>

Further convention details, including hotel information will be provided in the coming weeks.

Make plans to attend now. It promises to be a most memorable convention!



in Ottawa to express our concerns about labour shortages in agriculture and restrictions on accessing foreign workers. The Task Force met with Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, the Prime Minister's Office and the Conservative caucus in each of the three prairie provinces as well as officials with Industry Canada, Employment and Social Development, and Citizenship and Immigration.

- On February 23, Director Jeff Prosko met with the Hon. Scott Moe, Saskatchewan Minister of the

Environment and the Hon. Lyle Stewart, Minister of Agriculture to discuss proposed changes to Saskatchewan farmland drainage regulations. We have since written to the government putting forward alternative proposals that better reflect the interests of farmers.

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The Wheat Growers are pleased to have hired Fiona Jochum as a summer student to work on a marketing plan and to help us recruit new members. Fiona graduated with an ag diploma from the University of Manitoba in 2014, taking top honours, and is now in the Agribusiness degree program at the U of M. She would love to hear from you, especially if you know of farmers in your area who share the Wheat Grower philosophy and would benefit from being a member.

Please feel free to give her a call at 204-451-0652. She looks forward to meeting many of you at our BBQ on June 17 during the Farm Progress Show in Regina.

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Wheat Growers in Action

- On February 27, the Wheat Growers issued a media release welcoming passage of Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act. The official announcement was made by the Hon. Gerry Ritz at the Canterra Seeds head office in Winnipeg. Directors Mike Bast and Graeme Manness and Executive Director Blair Rutter attended on behalf of the Wheat Growers. Mike was one of two farmers who spoke at the event, talking about how the Act will bring about greater investment in the development of new varieties of wheat and other crops.
- In early March, Director Margaret Hansen attended the National

Association of Wheat Growers annual meeting and the Commodity Classic, held in Phoenix. Maintaining a strong relationship with U.S. grower groups remains a high priority for our Association, so as to help minimize the risk of any trade friction on cross-border grain shipments.

- Kevin Bender, Past President, attended the Annual General Meeting and Board meeting of the Western Grains Research Foundation, held March 10 and 11 in Leduc, Alberta. The WGRF is spending \$18 million on research in 2015, which is more than double the amount spent in 2013.
- The Wheat Grower board of directors held a Board meeting in Saskatoon on March 16 & 17. We extend our thanks to New Holland and Novozymes for hosting our board meeting at their facilities.
- On March 17, Director Cherilyn Nagel was the keynote speaker at the FCL Agronomy Summit in Saskatoon, speaking to the Co-op agro centre staff about the needs and expectations of the modern grain farmer.

- On March 30, the Wheat Growers issued a media release entitled *Wheat Growers support return to a demand-driven grain shipping model*, expressing our support for the federal government decision to end the railway shipping mandates. The Wheat Growers noted the volume mandates, first implemented in March 2014, had been successful in reducing the grain shipping backlog and bringing projected carryout stocks back down to normal levels. However, as President Levi Wood commented, "the emergency situation is over and the focus should now be on gaining changes to the Canada Transportation Act that will improve railway service and increase grain shipping capacity to meet the long-term needs of our industry."

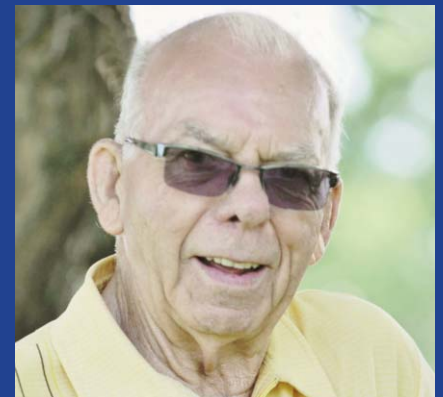
- Throughout March and April, Cherilyn Nagel gave several presentations throughout Saskatchewan on behalf of Farm & Food Care, talking to farmers

about how we can increase the awareness of agriculture and its importance among non-farming audiences

- In early April, President Levi Wood, Director Kevin Bender and Executive Director Blair Rutter attended the Monsanto Grower Advisory Council meeting in San Francisco. While at the meeting, Council members had the opportunity to visit the headquarters of Climate Corp., a subsidiary of Monsanto that is working on satellite-based technology that can be used to help farmers make crop production decisions.
- On April 9, we made a submission to the Canadian Grain Commission regarding its proposal to extend its licensing and payment security provisions to feed mills. The Wheat Growers supported the extension, providing farmers have the ability to opt out of payment insurance at the time of delivery if they so wish.

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Congratulations Wally!



The Wheat Growers congratulate Wally Nelson, founding President of the Wheat Growers, on his forthcoming induction into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. Wally will be inducted into the Hall in a ceremony in Saskatoon on August 1. We invite all members to join us at this happy event! The Wheat Growers are very proud to have nominated Wally for this honour. It was long overdue!

Congratulations Alanna!



The Wheat Growers wish to congratulate Alanna Koch, Saskatchewan Deputy Minister of Agriculture, on receiving a YWCA Women of Distinction award for Leadership and Management at a gala event on April 23 in Regina. Several Wheat Grower friends were on hand to join in the celebration. Alanna was the Executive Director of the Wheat Growers from 1992 to 1999. A well-deserved honour!

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Wheat Growers in Action*

- On April 9, Jim Wickett attended the Western Grain Standards Committee meeting at the Canadian Grain Commission in Winnipeg. Jim expressed support for the CGC's proposal to tighten the gluten strength standards of the CWRS and CPS classes to improve consistency and help address quality concerns raised by customers. Jim has since been appointed by the CGC to serve as the Saskatchewan producer representative on a working group that will be establishing the grading standards for the new interim milling wheat class.
- On April 15, the Wheat Growers issued a media release supporting the privatization of the CWB, which involved a cash injection of \$250 million by G3 Global Grain Corporation, a joint venture of Bunge Canada and SALIC Canada Limited. President Levi

Wood commented favourably on the deal, saying that it will "increase grain handling capacity and strengthen the CWB's ability to compete for farmers' grain."

- Cherilyn Nagel attended the Board meeting of the Canada Grains Council in Saskatoon on April 15. A large part of the Council's work continues to be on maintaining market access for Canadian grain, addressing such issues as Maximum Pesticide Residue Limits, food safety regulations (including limits on mycotoxins) and tolerances regarding trace levels of GMOs in non-GMO grain shipments.
- On April 22, the Wheat Growers issued a media release welcoming provisions in the federal budget that will see an increase in the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption (LCGE) to \$1 million and reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 9% over the next 4 years. The Wheat Growers had first called for an increase in the LCGE to \$1 million in a submission to the Finance Committee in 2010.



Stay in Touch! The Wheat Growers have recently learned that some of you may not have been receiving our e-mails, as they are getting caught up in spam filters. If you are having this problem, you may have to add brut-ter@wheatgrowers.ca to your "safe list" on your electronic devices. Or we might just have your wrong e-mail address. If you're not hearing from us, please contact Fiona at 204-451-0652 or Blair at 204-256-2353. We want to make sure you don't miss a bit of news from the Wheat Growers!

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