



July 26, 2023

Hon. Lawrence MacAuley
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
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Email: lawrence.macaulay@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister MacAuley,

RE: CGC changes to Canadian grain grading

Without your intervention, prairie wheat farmers will soon be faced with an unjust change in grading standards that will have a massive and long-term negative impact on their incomes. This fall, farmers across the prairies will harvest wheat that, under the current rules would be graded as #1, however, due to the changes set by the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) coming into effect on August 1, 2023 they will be forced to sell it as a #2 instead. The price grain companies pay for #2 wheat is lower than for #1.

In spite of opposition from virtually all of the farmers on the CGC's Western Standards Committee, the CGC has decided to 'harmonize' primary and export standards for wheat as of August 1, 2023. See the CGC news release *Canadian grain grading changes coming for the 2023-2024 crop year* at <https://www.canada.ca/en/grain-commission/news/2023/06/canadian-grain-grading-changes-coming-for-the-2023-2024-crop-year.html>

The National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Wheat Growers Association (WGA) disagree on many policy matters but we are united in our opposition to the harmonization of primary and export standards for wheat until further clarifying evidence of the impact on farmers and customers of Canadian grain is done, as was moved and passed by the CGC's Western Standards Committee at their April 4 meeting.

When a farmer brings their grain to the elevator, there are several different measurements taken in order to grade it. These measurements include bushel weight, number of wheat kernels of other classes, total foreign material, and so on. Currently, the benchmarks for country elevator grades are slightly lower than the official export grades for bulk wheat when it is loaded onto ships.

The impending CGC grade standard change has costly implications for farmers' incomes. For example, harmonized test weight means that CWRS wheat (hard red spring wheat used for baking bread) must weigh at least 63.3 lbs/bushel when delivered to the elevator instead of the current standard of 60.1 lbs/bushel or it will be downgraded to a #2.

Due to variations in growing conditions, and thus for wheat crop quality across the prairies, loads that grade #1 under current rules often exceed the minimum standards, allowing grain companies to blend country deliveries to ensure the export standard is met when they assemble shipments at their port terminals.

The CGC is adamant about their move to “harmonize” country elevator and export grading standards, but has been unable to provide us with any historic cost-benefit analysis on the impacts of this change on either the producer or the grain handlers. We are particularly concerned with the Chief Commissioner’s remarks stating that the Western Standards Committee’s input is not binding on the CGC, and there was no indication that there would be any further review of the serious and legitimate concerns raised by producer representatives.

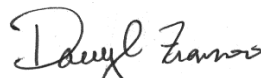
Producer members of the Western Standards Committee are active farmers who take time away from their operations to provide their insight on behalf of prairie farmers. It is not acceptable for the Committee to be used, as it appears in this case, as a means to rubber stamp a decision already made by the CGC.

Minister MacAuley, we ask that you halt this heavy-handed move until the full impacts on all stakeholders are presented to the Western Standards Committee at their next meeting. This matter requires your prompt attention, as we are only days away from this change.

Sincerely



Jenn Pfenning,
President, NFU



Daryl Fransoo
Chair, WGA

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