

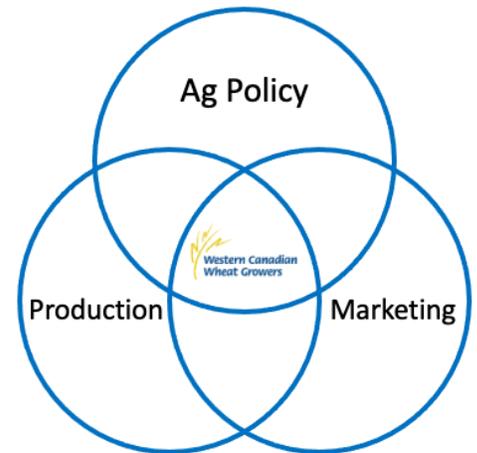
# ADVOCATING FOR YOU

Policy Update: April 2021

Your grandfather and father focused on production. You also know marketing can make just as much of a difference on your farm's profitability. And now farmers must have a solid Ag policy. Two of the three may not be enough for sustainable profitability.

So, here's a recap of some files WCWGA is involved in:

**Gene Editing** is under consultation by Health Canada regarding how it should be regulated. Being a science-driven body, with a policy that novelty of a food be determined by the final product and not the process, this critical innovation in plant breeding should be exempt. This is required to keep Canadian farmers competitive globally and provide consumers with foods with health benefits. WCWGA is a member of Canada Grains Council who have made it easy to [make your voice count](#). Hit the link and take 1-2 minutes to join WCWGA in letting the federal government know how important it is to get this decision right.



**Carbon Tax** continues to evolve, and WCWGA support farmers being able to gain on the revenue side, if they're getting hammered on the cost side. [Carbon sequestration](#) of our min-till systems and other practices, pull carbon from the atmosphere...period. Reversal of such practices would reverse sequestration. So, if the federal government wants to reward for reduced carbon, farmers should be rewarded as well. Simple. Just make sure the way to measure, track and administer sequestration schemes doesn't cost more than the benefit, and have all the value ending up in administrators' pockets. If they provide value, fine, although if the schemes are too complex and administratively demanding, resources will be squandered at many levels. And paying tax on the actual carbon tax? Asking farmers to use DEF fuel, and then tax it? Really? Does that sound like sensible policy to you?

**Canada Grain Act and Grain Commission Modernization** is yet another consultation that WCWGA has been very active in via a Grain Growers of Canada (GGC, we're a member) working group. Let's hope this exercise isn't another "consultation" that results in a report cherry-picking what they wanted to hear, to claim no significant changes are required. Here's an example of some that are;

- **Objective** of the Act is to manage grain quality standards and handling in the interests of grain producers. Keep the focus on grain producers, and "regulate" as the objects state. Don't try to be a service provider if they can be done better and less expensively by a third party. As the CGC has access to certain data, they could collect and disseminate it in conjunction with e.g. Stats Canada, to help farmers market better, and be better protected. A grain system should be about making Canadian grain farmers more competitive.
- **Protection of producers' payments** is required, although the cost of the current bond seems higher than the payouts. There are several options the CGC should develop business cases for,

which could be shared in the name of transparency. In the meantime, modify the legislation through this modernization exercise, so that we'll have the option to "future-proof" later.

- **Outward weighing and inspection** should be done by a third party to improve service while reducing costs. Having three-quarter of the tests duplicated is a waste of resources. CGC should oversee and regulate, but not be the cause of conflict of interest. Costs all end up in your basis.
- **Governance** needs changing to ensure leaders modernize. A Board structure would allow for better representation of all jurisdictions (geographic and sector) and hold a CEO to account.
- **Inland grading** has a number of modernization options to better reflect today's grain system. This is where farmers' hand over ownership, and where technology should be sought to automate grading more efficiently and consistently. Specifications prioritized by buyers of Canadian grain should be measured and shared between buyers (e.g. millers, bakers) and sellers (farmers, grain cos) to supplement those defining grades and classifications.
- **Funding** mechanisms exist, and the best approach can be determined once a modernized Act and Commission are right-sized and associated costs projected.
- **The surplus** collected and held by the CGC is simply a credit to farmers' accounts, and fees (paid by grain companies and passed along to farmers) should be stopped until a reasonable contingency is reached.

If the Act and Commission are to act "in the best interest of producers" we should all be aware of what it does, how, and have input. Transparency and strong farmer representation is a must. WCWGA is supportive of GGC's submission and will make their own WCWGA submission to the consultation available to members.

**Responsible Grain** (aka the "Code") is another consultation WCWGA continues to engage in. WCWGA raised concerns about the first release this past winter. This should be about showcasing the [sustainable practices](#) farmers have been doing, to build consumer trust and keep markets open to some of the most sustainably grown grain globally.

It has been sent back for a re-write and we'll continue to watch for the next step to ensure farmers participate in its development. We recognize the merit in farmers determining their own production (and marketing) guidelines, so WCWGA will work to get the language, tone and intent right.

**Seed Act consultation** will review how seed is regulated and varieties registered. As with VUA (Seed Value Creation's new name), both impact investment in plant breeding in Canada. VUA is focused on commercial business models while the other focuses on regulation. WCWGA is active in both as we want to ensure investment, competition, and efficiency in how new varieties are brought to market. And by the way, if a variety is registered in Canada, it should be graded as such regardless of where it's grown. WCWGA believes in [open and free markets](#) so let's not allow politicians on either side of the border hamper free trade trying to make non-tariff trade barriers out of red herrings.

**The Neonic** (insecticide) decision recently announced by Health Canada (PMRA) comes after AB Ag and CCGA collected samples used as "real world data". Farmer groups, including WCWGA, Canada Grains Council, CropLife Canada and others advocated for policy writers to apply science, data, risk (not precautionary) and consider the trade-offs. NGO's (non-government orgs and special interest groups) often don't think that way. Banning a use or active ingredient can increase overall environmental load of less desirable products when a label adjustment can resolve any concerns. They demand sufficient production of healthy food, yet want the required tools taken away from

farmers. Ironically (and likely not realizing it) they want a safe product like glyphosate banned, when it's the driver behind min-till, an increase in organic matter and soil health.

Reading the article about **rural connectivity** in this month's *Wheat Beat*, you'll realize the list of policy topics continues to grow (transportation, drainage, right to repair, etc.). Efforts to "green" the environment need to be relevant, practical, and more than virtue-signalling at the expense of meaningful impactful practises. That's why it's so important farmers get engaged and have their voices heard. PMRA / Health Canada, CFIA, and Environment & Climate Change Canada all need to use science, and an understanding of the impact their decisions have on Canada's healthy food production and economic targets.

With seeding starting, your agronomic, financial and marketing plans will be in place.

What's your farm's advocacy plan?

For more detail on WCWGA's policy positions, visit our [website](#) .