

For Immediate Release:

Farmers Pleased with Progress on Columbia and Peru Free Trade Agreements

(Ottawa, ON. Fri. May 22, 2009)

The Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) are pleased with the progress made by the Government of Canada on the finalization and implementation of Canada's free trade agreements with Columbia and Peru.

"With over 90% of Canadian farmers dependent on an export market for their crops, freer trade is essential to their livelihoods," said Doug Robertson, President of the Grain Growers of Canada. "Expansion of our markets abroad will ensure our farmers have opportunities to increase both our sales and our profitability."

"Canadian Wheat Board sales of wheat and barley are currently over 230 million dollars to Columbia and Peru, and pulse exports are nearly 100 million annually. The tariff walls on these valuable crops range between 12-25% and these are dollars that come directly out of our farmers pockets," added Robertson. "Without these bi-lateral agreements, Canadian farmers would not be able to compete with Argentine and American producers who have secured or are negotiating trade agreements to allow market access for their farmers."

"The opening of new markets for Canadian beef is really good news for our farmers as well. Not only are these value-added products, but domestic beef production is one of the largest markets for our feed grains," said Robertson.

"Amidst this global downturn, as some countries turn down the path of protectionism, it is encouraging to see Canada stand up for liberalized trade and open markets. The prosperity of Canada's farmers depend on it," said Robertson.

The Grain Growers of Canada represent the interests of over 80,000 Canadian grain, pulse and oilseed producers of the Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Oat Rye and Triticale Association, Alberta Pulse Growers, Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, Alberta Grain Commission, Atlantic Grains Council, British Columbia Grain Producers Association, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Manitoba Corn Growers Association, Oat and Barley Council of Ontario, Prairie Oat Growers Association, Western Barley Growers Association, and Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association.

For more information on the Grain Growers, please visit www.ggc-pgc.ca

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