



**CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS**

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### CWB Customer Service Needs Improvement: Prairie farmers

**Regina, October 28, 2010** - As farmers receive their Voter's packages this week for the 2010 Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) Director's Election, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has released new survey results showing the customer service the CWB provides to Prairie farmers needs improvement.

The report, *Prairie Farmers' Report Card on CWB Customer Service: Improvements Needed*, is based on a survey of CFIB's primary producers in the Prairies. When asked how the overall service of the CWB has changed during the past 5 years, 45 per cent of Prairie farmers indicated there had been no change or it had worsened, while 35 per cent said it had improved.

"It is clear Prairie farmers deserve better on the customer service they receive from the Board," said Virginia Labbie, CFIB's policy analyst for agri-business. "The question needs to be asked - are the services offered by the CWB meeting producers' needs? It's a fair question farmers will ask their Director candidates on how they plan to improve the CWB's customer service so it better meets farmers' marketing needs.

#### **Other Key Findings:**

- ▶ **Specific customer service issues are in need of attention** - In rating five aspects of CWB staff (such as consistency and promptness of responses), 20 to 30 per cent of respondents rated these customer service essentials as "poor" and only half said they were "acceptable."
- ▶ **Farmers very dissatisfied with PPOs and CashPlus programs** - 60 per cent of respondents were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the 2009-10 Basic Price Contract for wheat and the 2009-10 FlexPro Producer Payment Option for wheat. Another 59 per cent of respondents were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the 2009-10 CashPlus program for malting barley. Direct feedback from producers reveals these programs are complicated, not transparent, poorly communicated and inaccessible.

"What business could survive with a third of its clients ranking its customer service as poor?" added Labbie. "These results should be a call to action for the Canadian Wheat Board whose job it is to serve farmers."

While the Producer Payment Options and CashPlus programs were supposed to give farmers more choice, flexibility and improved cash flow, it's evident they are not meeting producers' evolving marketing needs.

Farmers need consistent, timely, accessible and transparent marketing signals and information on CWB programs and contracts in order to make the best possible marketing decisions for their farm business.

"The message is clear: our members want to see improved customer service and Producer Payment Options and programs that better reflect producers' marketing needs," concluded Labbie.

**For more information or to arrange an interview with Virginia Labbie, please call 306 757-0000 or 800-992-2342.**

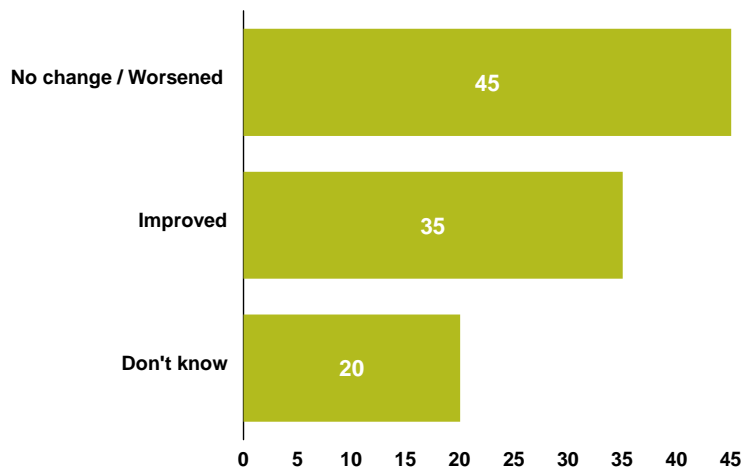
*CFIB is the business voice for agriculture, representing 7,200 independently owned and operated agri-businesses in Canada (1,900 in the Prairies), the majority of which are primary producers.*

## BACKGROUND

October 2010

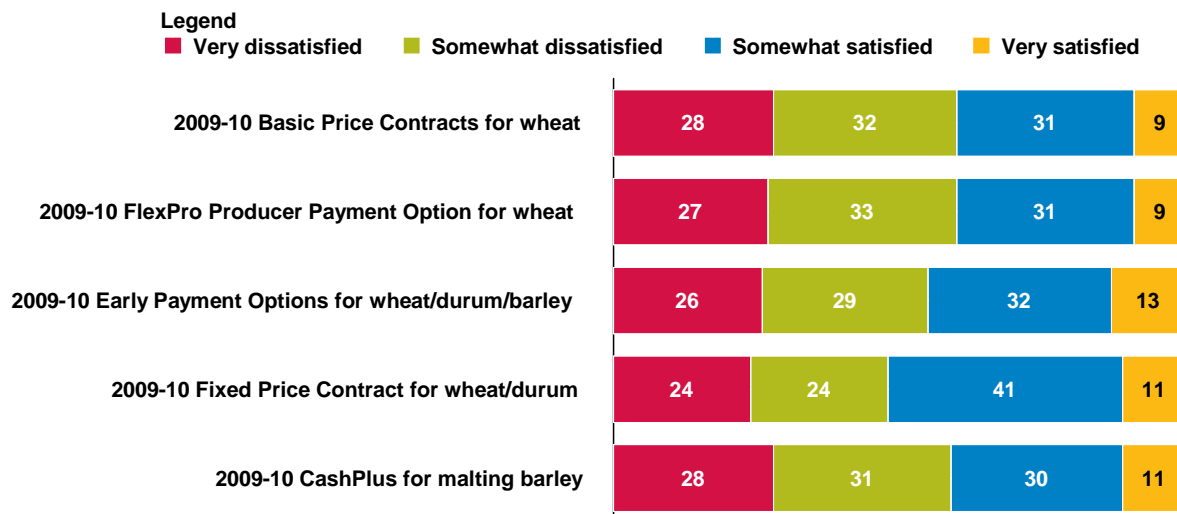
### *Overall customer service at the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB)*

How has the overall service of the CWB changed during the past 5 years?



### *Producer Payment Options and CashPlus*

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following programs:



Source: CFIB Agri-Business Bottom Line Survey No. 26, Prairie Data, April 2010, 411 respondents