

An unknown group of pro-Canadian Wheat Board farmers dumped a tonne of wheat in front of Brandon-Souris Conservative MP Merv Tweed's office Friday morning to protest the federal government's plan to end single-desk marketing of wheat and barley.

While a group of farmers spoke to Tweed's staff at approximately 9:30 a.m., a truck pulled up, passengers jumped out and dumped the grain. They left shortly afterwards.

"We are concerned about the Canadian Wheat Board," said Ian Robson of Deleau, a National Farmer's Union Manitoba representative. "We had a vote, held amongst farmers where a large majority supported the Canadian Wheat Board and we feel our member of Parliament should stand up for farmers. Stand up for democracy."

Robson said he believes Tweed and Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz are "setting up a discount grain company replacing the wheat board."

"They want to say there's going to be a wheat board but they want to take control of our wheat board," Robson said. "Currently, the wheat board is in control of farmers and it's important to have representation of farmers' interests in the grain marketing ... It's not possible for one farmer with an Internet connection to outdo the skills the wheat board has."

Tweed was not at his Brandon office when the grain was dropped off.

"I agree with the right of anyone to protest," Tweed said in a phone interview from Ottawa. "To me, it seems a little misdirected, but nonetheless they have a right to speak. I feel I have heard already that people were planning to come to my office for meetings that felt intimidated by the crowd."

Tweed said the government has heard from "most people" on the Canadian Wheat Board legislation currently in the House of Commons.

"I listened to the debate earlier on this week and sat in on the committee hearing



Westman farmer Brad McDonald looks at a large pile of grain sitting in front of Brandon-Souris MP Merv Tweed's constituency office on 18th Street North after voicing his opposition to the federal government's plan to end the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly alongside other area farmers on Friday.

(Tim Smith/Brandon Sun) PAGE A8 NOV 5 2011 BDN SUN

MERV TWEED'S LETTER TO THE WHEAT BOARD

The following is a letter that Brandon-Souris Conservative MP Merv Tweed sent to Canadian Wheat Board chairman Allan Oberg after a group of farmers dumped a small load of grain in front of his Brandon office on Friday morning.

Friday, November 4, 2011

Dear Mr. Oberg,

Today my office in Brandon was greeted by Canadian Wheat Board supporters. As a token of their CWB support they left a tonne of grain in the parking lot.

I would urge you not to press charges against these farmers for not using the

Canadian Wheat Board for this delivery to my office. I am not sure what we will do with the wheat as if I sell it, I will be jailed.

Instead of working constructively to give farmers the stability they deserve, the board you are chair of is focused on wasting farmer's time and money. I urge you to support our legislation as our Government will continue to work in the best interests of farmers and give them the marketing freedom they deserve.

Sincerely,
Merv Tweed
MP Brandon-Souris

itself," Tweed said. "Are the Canadian Wheat Board and its chairman, Allen Oberg, actually putting the interests of farmers first? They were offered an opportunity to have a board member chair the working group. They were asked to participate and they refused. Now they are complaining after the fact they didn't have the opportunity."

In response to the farmer protest, Tweed sent a letter to Oberg, requesting legal amnesty for the people responsible for dumping the grain in front of his office.

"I certainly wouldn't want to sell it," Tweed said, citing it

would be illegal for him to do so.

By mid-afternoon, a counter protestor had placed a sign in the wheat reading: "Wheat Marketing Freedom at Last."

Tweed said the Canadian Wheat Board has "lost a tremendous opportunity."

"You tell me anywhere in the world where you could start a new company with 62 per cent of the market share, according to the Canadian Wheat Board," Tweed said. "You have all the contacts. You have all the business dealings from the last 30 years

in front of you, and you are hesitating on this? I think they are missing a great opportunity.

"If you want to move forward in the industry, if you want results for your family, you should have a choice as to what you do.

"Farmers buy the grain, put it in the ground, cultivate it, fertilize it, harvest it, and then take away their ability to sell it at the market they want to is just wrong."

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