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Build a better wheat board

The Leader-Post

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I am writing in response to the column by Kevin Hursh in which he talks about the CWB director elections and how there is little point in voting in the elections because the federal government is committed to giving western farmers marketing choice.

I am one farmer who is thrilled about the opportunities that will arise once I am free to sell my wheat and barley to whomever I please. I want the ability to seek out the best possible markets, whether a local flour mill, my local elevator, or a buyer half-way around the world. I also want the freedom to contract my grain through the CWB when it makes good business sense for my farm operation.

Hursh claims any move to give farmers marketing choice would be a "mockery of producer self-determination". What a ludicrous statement. Self-determination is one of the main reasons why I want the freedom to market by own grain. I don't want to leave it to others to determine whether my farm makes money or not. I want to accept the responsibility to succeed or fail.

Why is this concept so difficult for Hursh to understand? As an independent columnist and consultant, is he not free to offer his services to whomever he pleases? Can he not appreciate, as a fellow entrepreneur, that I, too, am willing to accept the risk and reward of operating my own business? No one tells him how to run his business and yet he believes "the majority" of farmers (if indeed that's the case) should tell me how to run my business.

Hursh is correct in pointing out that, in past CWB elections, voters have tended to elect those directors who are supporters of central planning. Would it bother him at all to know that almost 40 per cent of the eligible voters in the last CWB election had zero deliveries of grain to the CWB, and that about 50 per cent delivered less than 40 tonnes of grain?

Also, does it ever occur to Hursh that in past elections, many well-qualified farmers who support marketing choice would never dream of letting their names stand for election, simply because they wouldn't want to be part of an organization that forces their fellow farmers to do business with it against their will? No, the simple truth is that the very nature of the CWB is such that it generally attracts those candidates of a socialist mindset -- that is, those who presume to know what is best for each of us.

Despite all this, I do feel it is important in the current CWB election campaign for farmers to vote for those candidates who have strong business credentials and who are determined to help the CWB make the transition to a market

choice environment. The federal government has sent a strong message that it is committed to giving farmers marketing freedom. We, therefore, need to elect directors who have the skills to make it work, so the CWB remains a good marketing tool for those farmers who wish to use it.

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