



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Vaile won't guarantee wheat growers vote on wheat export arrangements **Wheat growers need to mobilise**

Deputy Prime Minister and Nationals leader Mark Vaile failed to guarantee that the Government will consult with all registered wheat growers prior to any changes in Australia's wheat export arrangements.

As a result, Mr Windsor is urging wheat growers to articulate their views strongly at tomorrow's grower meeting in Parkes and demand that they have a direct role in any decision making relating to their futures.

"It is the Australian wheat grower's product and they should have control of its future.

I am disappointed in Mr Vaile's answer in that he refused to guarantee a poll of all registered wheat growers prior to any decisions being made.

I believe that all growers must be involved in any process concerning their future," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that it should not be left to so-called representative bodies to be the spokespeople on this issue as these bodies are either in the pocket of the Government or had their own political agendas which was not necessarily the interests of wheat farmers.

"The Grains Council of Australia for instance became the voice of feedlotters, the car industry and the government and virtually everyone else but the grain growers who they are supposed to represent when the ethanol debate was taking place.

We've seen the conduct of the NFF President Peter Corish's lap dog behaviour over Telstra as a so-called voice of rural Australia in supporting the Telstra sale legislation with their voice being used as political leverage to persuade Senator Barnaby Joyce to support the sale.

Regrettably, these farm bodies have shown themselves to be puppets of the Government rather than leaders of farm opinion.

For that reason, I would urge farmers at Parkes to demand that they have a direct say in the Single Desk issue and not leave their voice with those rural bodies.

Wheat growers must get mobilised and heard if they want to maintain control of their own destiny through the Single Desk," Mr Windsor said.

Following is the Hansard of Mr Windsor's Question and Mr Vaile's answer

Further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868

Wheat Exports

WINDSOR, Mr Antony Harold Curties, New England 2.43 pm

My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the Deputy Prime Minister give a guarantee to Australia's wheat growers that, before any changes are contemplated to wheat export arrangements, a properly constituted poll of all registered wheat growers will be conducted?

Minister for Trade

Mr VAILE—

I thank the member for New England for his question. Obviously, the whole debate about the oil for food program and wheat exports across the world, particularly to Iraq, has raised an element of expectation and concern for Australian wheat growers, who are genuinely trying to do their job of growing wheat and selling it for the best price overseas.

We have continued to support them in that. As the Prime Minister indicated yesterday in his response to the member for New England's question, he is well aware of the government's policy on the existence and operation of the single desk.

Regarding the member for New England's point about the operation of the single desk and the involvement of wheat growers, the wheat growers of Australia, whether they be in the eastern states or the western states, feel very attached to the mechanism that has served them well over many years. We do not envisage in the short term any changes in this policy.

As we have done in the past, in terms of communicating, seeking responses and consulting with grower bodies in the different sectors of agriculture, we would of course consult with the wheat growing community of Australia if there were any proposed changes to the mechanisms that are in place.