

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from the Online Survey:

1. How will wheat and barley maintain separate goals in terms of market development and research?

Combining the Alberta Barley and Alberta Wheat Commission management teams in 2017 allowed the staff to work together on core program areas of research and market development while expanding our agronomy extension programming. The staff operates in teams to contribute equal resources to both crops and that will continue under an amalgamated organization.

2. How will the board ensure barley does not lose its identity to a larger crop like wheat?

Alberta barley and wheat have two distinct brands and are world renowned end-use products in their own regard. Alberta barley is known as a quality ingredient in the brewing industry and a prominent feed ingredient in the beef industry. Alberta wheat is a quality food ingredient for domestic and global markets, as well as used for domestic feed and ethanol industries. Alberta-grown barley and wheat serve different markets that are critical to Alberta's economy. The commissions would strive to preserve these two brands under one organization.

3. Why does the proposed governance model suggest 12 directors and 24 delegates?

The commissions propose 12 directors as it provides regional balance from the six regions, and also adequate capacity for farmer board members to serve on internal committees and external organizations. 12 directors would also allow more opportunity of equal representation for both crops. Additionally, the proposed model offers a reduction in directors and delegates from the current model. Currently between the two organizations, there are 20 directors and 39 delegates and regional representatives.

4. Does the proposed governance model mean one barley grower and one wheat grower from each of the six regions region?

If the commissions were to amalgamate, an interim board would be established during the transition phase. The interim board would have equal representation from wheat and barley farmers (six from each existing wheat and barley board). However, as the amalgamated

commission becomes more established and progress into the election cycles, growers will have the opportunity to elect the eligible wheat and barley farmer candidates on the permanent board of the amalgamated organization.

5. How will the merit-based funding model work? How will the commissions decide quantitatively and qualitatively the projects to invest in?

Under an amalgamated organization, the intent is to move to merit-based funding for research and market development. This would be formalized and measured through a strategic plan for the new commission. The commission's committees would make recommendations to the board, and the board would determine how funding is allocated. Certain national research and market development initiatives are proportionate to wheat and barley production, and those investments must be honoured. However, the merit-based funding model will allow the board to use their discretion on projects or initiatives purely based on the value delivered to farmers. Moving away from a funding mechanism strictly based on check-off revenues per crop allows the commissions to make discretionary judgments and capitalize on opportunities that could benefit barley and wheat farmers.

6. Has Marketing Council been involved and approved this proposed governance model?

Marketing Council has been involved in the amalgamation exploration work conducted by the amalgamation sub-committee. Marketing Council continues to provide guidance and advice relating to the commissions' provincial plan regulations. It will be up to the farmer membership to decide on the governance model and next steps.

7. How will the board ensure one crop is not favoured more over the other?

Under an amalgamated organization, the mission of the board of directors will be to ensure the long-term profitability of both wheat and barley: two important cereal crops to Alberta growers. This would be part of the strategic plan for the new organization. The amalgamated organization would allow a crop with smaller acreage, like barley, to leverage shared synergies and initiatives with a larger acreage crop, such as wheat. The intent of the amalgamated structure is to remove duplication, provide cost improvement opportunities, represent wheat and barley industry with a stronger unified voice, and ensure a viable future for both cereal crops. Management's philosophy has been to serve both crops equally, share resources and balance the benefits to both barley and wheat.

8. Is there potential for an all-crops commission in Alberta?

While multi-crop organizations exist in other Canadian provinces – such as the Manitoba Crop Alliance and Grain Farmers of Ontario – this remains to be seen in Alberta. At this time, Alberta Barley and the Alberta Wheat Commission have been tasked by our farmer members to explore the efficiencies and synergies of amalgamating these two Alberta cereal commissions.

9. If amalgamation does not go forward, what will happen?

Not amalgamating could be a lost opportunity as multiple crops can work together to leverage efficiencies and remove duplication. Continuing to operate two separate organizations with one management team may limit our ability to gain further efficiencies. As farming operations get bigger, farmers will expect consolidation efficiencies. We are already seeing this happen in other provinces such as Manitoba (Manitoba Crop Alliance) and Ontario (Grain Farmers of Ontario).

10. What are the benefits of moving to a single organization?

Amalgamating will create cost-savings above what the commissions have achieved so far. There will be fewer directors, board meetings, annual reports, membership investment in external organizations and one set of audited financials. Additionally, a smaller acreage crop such as barley could leverage new and heightened opportunities if it's funding model was not constricted by formula-based funding, but rather merit-based.

11. What are the next steps in this amalgamation process?

The farmer members would need to bring forward resolutions at the commissions' Regional Meetings in November. Next, the resolutions will need to be passed at both the Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley AGMs, in December and January respectively. From there, the two boards would need to pass motions for a plebiscite in order for a plebiscite to go forward.