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NEWS RELEASE

Release Date: June 29, 2011

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Wheat Farmers Urge Quick Passage of Pending FTAs

ARLINGTON, Virginia -- A statement from Wayne Hurst, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers and a wheat farmer from near Burley, Idaho, and Don Schieber, chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates and a wheat farmer from near Ponca City, Okla.:

"U.S. wheat farmers were pleased to hear news Tuesday of a possible agreement that would move forward the passage of three pending free trade agreements, and of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus' intention to hold mock mark-ups of the measures on Thursday.

"All three of these pacts are important to wheat farmers who depend on exports to sell about half of the wheat we grow every year.

"The agreement with Colombia is particularly vital today because a free trade agreement between Colombia and Canada is set to go into effect in mid-August. That agreement would allow Canadian wheat to enter Colombia duty-free while leaving duties on U.S. wheat in place. Passing the U.S.-Colombia FTA will help prevent lost sales estimated at \$100 million each year in that important and growing market.

"We strongly believe these agreements have languished long enough and call once again for their quick consideration and approval."

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