

# MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS 2003

## HOW TO USE THIS MD&A

The Pool completed a financial restructuring on March 14, 2003. As a result, the company has accounted for the reorganization by using the principles of comprehensive revaluation. This revaluation, known as "fresh start accounting," limits the comparability of the Pool's current financial results to those of prior periods. Additionally, management has prepared its discussion in the context of its industry, market environment, financial performance, priorities, opportunities and risks for the future.

## FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING

On October 24, 2002, following two and a half years of prolonged drought on the Prairies that severely restricted cash flow, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool announced its intention to develop a consensual restructuring plan with its banks and medium term noteholders. The process was effectively finalized on February 4, 2003, and completed in March of 2003 with the exchange of \$405 million in senior secured debt for \$150 million of senior subordinated notes, \$255 million of convertible subordinated notes and 22,938,037 Class B non-voting shares. Additional information is contained in Note 2 to the consolidated financial statements.

## FRESH START ACCOUNTING

The restructuring has been accounted for using the principles of comprehensive revaluation (fresh start accounting) as required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). As a result of the financial restructuring, the Pool became a new reporting entity with a new opening balance sheet effective January 31, 2003.

The balance sheet is presented on a post-restructuring basis as at January 31, 2003, and July 31, 2003. Balance sheets for prior periods are not comparable because they were prepared on a historical cost basis. Specifically, a revaluation was made of the company's debt and equity components based on market values at the time of the revaluation with corresponding adjustments made to asset values. Readers may refer to Note 2 to the Consolidated Financial Statements for a complete description of the revaluation.

The company's statements of earnings and cash flows include the financial results for the six months ended January 31, 2003, prior to the restructuring, along with the six months ended July 31, 2003, post-restructuring, using the principles of fresh start accounting. The cumulative total of these two reporting periods are not comparable to the 12 months ended July 31, 2002, because of the 2003 reorganization and subsequent comprehensive revaluation.

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

The Pool is an integrated and diversified company engaged in four distinct but interrelated agri-businesses. It is the largest publicly traded agri-business in the province of Saskatchewan and the second largest in Western Canada.

The company's core businesses are grain handling and marketing and agri-products sales. The Pool also participates in agri-food processing and livestock production through wholly owned and affiliated companies and through strategic alliances and supply agreements.

## BUSINESS MODEL

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's business model is designed to optimize its position in the agri-food pipeline by connecting producers and their commodities with destination customers around the world, generating revenue at each stage of its value-added pipeline.

The pipeline begins with the producer. The Pool works with its producer customers to provide specialized varieties of grains and oilseeds, along with fertilizer, crop inputs and agronomic services, in an effort to support high-quality, high-yielding commodities demanded in the international marketplace. Through production contracts, trucking premiums and targeted marketing programs, the Pool attracts grain into its high throughput grain handling network where the product is cleaned, dried and blended before it is sold to the domestic or export market. The Pool, through commodity specialists, markets its inventories to end-use customers, shipping the product by truck or rail to domestic users or to export positions. For the international marketplace, the product primarily moves through a port terminal facility to the end user where it is further processed into food and other agriculturally based products.

## GRAIN HANDLING AND MARKETING

The Pool's grain handling and marketing operations consist of 43 high throughput grain handling and marketing terminals and 11 seed cleaning and specialty plants strategically located in the prime agricultural growing regions of Western Canada, two wholly owned port terminal export facilities located in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Thunder Bay, Ontario, and an ownership interest in an export facility in Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

## AGRI-PRODUCTS

The Pool's Agri-products segment consists of 100 retail locations throughout Western Canada, including its grain handling and marketing facilities, through which the Pool sells seed, fertilizer and crop protection products. The Agri-products segment also includes a research and development center located at the University of Saskatchewan, the company's share of jointly owned affiliate Western Co-operative Fertilizers (WCFL), a fertilizer wholesaler located in Calgary, Alberta, and the Pool's interest in Interprovincial Co-operative Limited (IPCO), a chemical formulation plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Through its strategic alliances with Farm Credit Canada and John Deere Credit, the Pool also offers agri-products financing to Prairie producers.

## AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

The Pool's significant interests in agri-food processing include wholly owned Can-Oat Milling, the world's largest industrial oat miller, with approximately 40% of the capacity within its primary competitor group; and 42% owned Prairie Malt Limited, one of North America's largest single-site malting plants.

## OTHER

Through its interest in the Heartland Group of Companies, the Pool is involved in hog production and marketing. The Pool wholly owns three hog production facilities and holds majority interests in four other facilities, all located in Saskatchewan. The Pool also operates a feed mill at North Battleford and an aquaculture operation at Lake Diefenbaker, both located in Saskatchewan.

## MARKET ENVIRONMENT

### GRAINS AND OILSEEDS

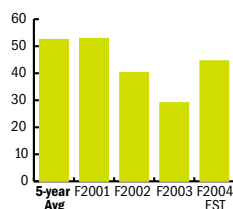
Western Canada typically produces about 53 million tonnes of grains and oilseeds annually, of which 63%, or 33 million tonnes, is available to licensed grain handlers. During the past two growing seasons, drought hit the Prairies, severely affecting the quantity and quality of commodities available to market participants in the following fiscal years.

For fiscal 2003, the crop production of 29 million tonnes was 45% below the five-year average because of the drought. Initial production estimates from this year's harvest suggest production for fiscal 2004 will rise to approximately 45 million tonnes in Western Canada, 85% of the five-year average, despite heat stress in the month of August and above average grasshopper populations. Based on these numbers, the Pool believes that approximately 26 million tonnes will be available to licensed grain handlers in fiscal 2004. Final production estimates will be available from Statistics Canada in December 2003.

From an export perspective, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is the sole exporter of western Canadian wheat and barley (Board grains). The Pool also buys and markets for its own account, non-Board grains such as canola, oats, peas and mustard.

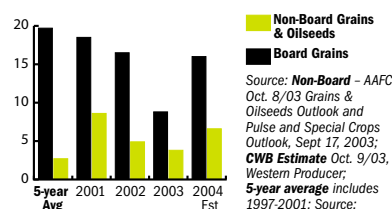
Exports in 2003 declined to historic lows of 12.6 million tonnes, just 50% of the five-year average, reflecting volume declines, poor quality and a significantly reduced Canadian Wheat Board export program. The Pool expects exports in fiscal 2004 to rebound to approximately 89% of the five-year average. Higher quality from this year's harvest, coupled with increased demand in the international export market due to a poor European crop, is expected to partially offset the impact of production declines and the corresponding impact on earnings.

**Western Canadian Production**  
(millions of metric tonnes)



Source: October 2003,  
Statistics Canada Estimate  
5-year average includes 1997-2001

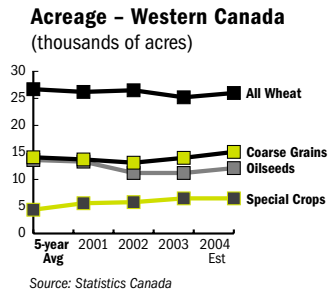
**Canadian Exports Excluding Products**  
(millions of metric tonnes)



Source: **Non-Board** - AAFC  
Oct. 8/03 Grains &  
Oilseeds Outlook and  
Pulse and Special Crops  
Outlook, Sept 17, 2003;  
**CWB Estimate** Oct. 9/03,  
Western Producer;  
**5-year average** includes  
1997-2001; Source:  
Canadian Grain  
Commission, "Exports of  
Canadian Grain"

## AGRI-PRODUCTS MARKET

The agri-products industry in Western Canada is a mature market. It is made up of approximately 250 competitors servicing 1,000 locations throughout Western Canada. Independent retailers, who hold approximately 30% of the market, together with a host of major grain handlers, sell seed, fertilizer, crop protection products and small agricultural equipment.



Over the past decade, there has been a shift in crop mix with less cereal grain and more canola, oilseeds and special crops being grown. The increase drove crop input volumes and values higher. However, seeded acres for these crops peaked in 1995 and there has been no significant growth since that time.

Given stable production acreage and stable volumes of crop inputs applied per acre, the opportunity for revenue growth in the industry will come largely from price increases and cropping pattern shifts.

The seeded acreage of crops varies from year to year, based largely on price forecasts and input costs. Currently, the only long-term trend affecting

seeded acreage is a steady increase in special crops (peas, lentils, mustard and canary seed) from 1.5 million acres in 1990-91 to 6.5 million acres in 2004. This growth may have reached its peak as Canada now has 50% of world exports in many of these crops.

The number of producers has decreased steadily and the average number of acres farmed, including owned and leased land, has grown to 1,600, meaning fewer customers with greater leverage. As a result, price, availability, information and service are the key sales drivers in this business.

The total market is approximately \$2.7 billion in sales, geographically distributed as follows: Saskatchewan, \$1.2 billion; Alberta, \$0.9 billion; and Manitoba, \$0.6 billion (Source: Statistics Canada, May 2003 Farm Operating Expenses & Depreciation Charges). The Pool competes in 17 market centers with an effective market coverage of approximately \$1.8 billion. Low crop prices and poor growing conditions put pressure on volumes and margins from time to time, but in general, the industry has historically supported retail gross margins in the 15% range.

The industry is highly dependent on weather conditions and commodity prices. If poor growing conditions are anticipated due to drought or if commodity prices decline significantly, producers cannot justify the cost of inputs in terms of a return on investment and sales can suffer.

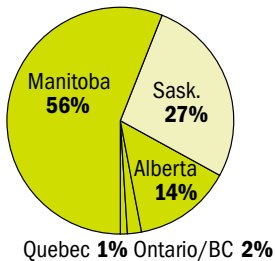
The industry is also highly seasonal with more than 75% of seed, fertilizer and crop protection products sold and delivered from mid-April to the end of June. This means that capacity is fully utilized during this period and underutilized the remainder of the year. This short-term high-level sales period requires strong logistical support to ensure timely deliveries that meet customer demands.

The fall season from August to November represents about 15% of the business. This market is also extremely dependent on the weather as early frost and snowfall can bring the season to a halt. A strong fall application period can relieve some of the spring logistical requirements because fertilizer will not be reapplied in the spring, while other products such as herbicides will be applied again in the spring.

## OAT PROCESSING (Sources: Statistics Canada, Can-Oat Milling)

Canada is the second largest oat producer and largest oat and oat product exporter, representing 48% of the world oat export trade. Total world production of 25.6 million tonnes includes both feed and human consumption oat production. Canadian oat production represents approximately 13% of this total and over the past 15 years, the industry has seen strong growth in North American milling demand. As a result, the percentage of total oat production that is utilized for food and industrial purposes has increased. Approximately 25% to 30% of the annual crop is milling quality, while the rest is utilized as feed. Canada consumes less than 50% of its production and exports the remainder.

**Geographical Breakdown of Canadian Exports**  
Human Oat Products Exports



Demand for oat ingredients continues to be heavily concentrated in the hot and cold cereal and snack bar markets. Health concerns in the North American population have had a dramatic impact on the sale of oat products. In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration in the United States approved a health claim for oat-based products proclaiming that the soluble fibre from oatmeal, as part of a low-saturated fat, low-cholesterol diet, may reduce the risk of heart disease. This official acceptance has heightened consumer interest in oat-based foods.

There are four types of oat processors in the North American marketplace including brand managers, industrial finished ingredient suppliers, industrial primary ingredient suppliers and feed mills. Can-Oat

Milling is an industrial finished ingredients supplier that supplies high-quality, high-value oat ingredients to consumer products companies for further processing.

## HOG PRODUCTION

Pork is the most popular meat in the global marketplace, representing approximately 40% of total meat consumption. In 2002, 85 million tonnes of pork was produced and consumed worldwide (Source: USDA – October, 2003). The industry is forecast to grow to 104 million tonnes by 2012, which translates into a growth rate of 1.9% per year (Source: FAPRI, 2003 Baseline). The majority of growth will occur in China, which is expected to produce 50% of the world's production by that time. However, 100% of that country's pork is consumed domestically, and many believe that China may become a significant pork importer over the longer term due to increasing demands for high-protein food.

Canada processes approximately 1.8 million tonnes of pork annually. Quebec and Ontario dominate the industry with 57% while Saskatchewan accounts for approximately 9%.

The Prairies offer many competitive advantages in terms of hog production. The expansive land base is relatively low cost, and traditionally colder climates help minimize disease, reduce heat stress and maintain high feed conversion ratios. Western Canadian producers also have access to quality low-cost feed grains and strong demand from packers due to underutilized newer processing capacity in the system.

The market price of Canadian hogs is tied directly to the Midwest USA price, set by American packers who are driven by supply and demand at the retail level.

Low-cost production is a key success factor, and, accordingly, achieving economies of scale is a critical component in minimizing the fixed-cost component of each hog produced. Efficiency can also be improved through husbandry practices, nutritional practices and

health protocols. Success is dependent on farrowing rates, mortality rates and feed conversion ratios.

## **POOL PRIORITIES**

With the financial restructuring complete, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has developed key priorities intended to drive its strategic direction and re-position the Pool as a leader in the industry.

The Pool has already responded to deregulation, rail line abandonment and other industry shifts with an aggressive rationalization program. We will continue to assess all businesses to determine the optimum operating structure. We recognize that while the Pool's new financial structure gives us a new start, it is critical that we size our operations so that we can operate with flexibility within our financial limits. We will continue to assess geographic representation and product line offerings and identify new competitive opportunities to optimize our footprint. These opportunities must have a strategic fit with our corporate priorities. In many cases, these strategic initiatives will be supply agreements, partnerships or joint ventures with other companies, where there are opportunities to capture synergy, share expertise, minimize risk and grow our business. Our relationships with food processors, international trading partners and others are also critical to our ability to earn revenues along the value chain, particularly for non-Board grains that are not consumed domestically.

With the number of western Canadian family farms on the decline, farm operations are much larger and customer needs have changed. The Pool intends to build on the customer contact strategies implemented in 2001 by developing customized producer profiles and new marketing strategies that are specific to the customers' unique needs and are aligned with the company's competitive strengths. We will implement training programs for front-line staff to enhance their customer service skills and to encourage long-term customer relationships. We will help them allocate resources based on the value that can be realized from each customer and coach them to deliver innovative, customer-specific solutions.

As the industry continues its rationalization and consolidation, we will heighten our focus on operational excellence as the driving principle within the company. There is little or no product differentiation among competitors so competing effectively in this environment is largely dependent on price and service. To that end, the Pool has undergone an extensive cost reduction program over the past three years that has eliminated approximately \$80 million in operating costs.

## **CAPABILITY TO DELIVER RESULTS**

The Pool's ability to achieve success in the western Canadian agricultural industry is dependent upon a number of factors. Rationalization and consolidation of smaller inefficient facilities remains a key focus for the industry given the significant over-capacity that remains in the system. The Pool moved quickly to respond to this challenge and over the past three years has reduced its own capacity from 2.1 million tonnes to 1.2 million tonnes. Other competitors have also closed excess capacity, however, more rationalization must take place by competitors to improve the turnover ratios and efficiency within the entire system.

Velocity has also become a key driver in the Pool business model – that is the ability to move volume through its primary grain handling network quickly and efficiently while maintaining quality specifications. The Pool has more than 40% of the 100-car loading capacity in the

industry, well ahead of the 18% held by its closest competitor. This is important because rail companies, which are responsible for moving the grain to export position, offer grain handling companies incentives for loading product onto multi-car unit trains. The Pool shares these incentives with producers to lower their costs while attracting the grain into its system, in an effort to increase market share.

Transportation and logistics are key to managing the pipeline to maximize earnings. In fiscal 2003, the Pool shipped 93% of its grain and oilseeds in 25-, 50- and 100-car loads, with 74% loaded in 50s and 100s even though total shipments were down dramatically due to drought. Effective August 1, 2003, the railways amended their incentive programs as follows:

<b>CP:</b>	25-car loads	- \$0.50 per tonne (previously \$1.00 per tonne)
	50-car loads	- \$4.00 per tonne (no change)
	100-car loads	- \$7.00 per tonne (previously \$6.00 per tonne)
	shuttle trains*	- \$7.00 to \$8.50 per tonne (previously \$6.50 per tonne)
<b>CN:</b>	25-car loads	- \$0.00 per tonne (previously \$1.00 per tonne)
	50-car loads	- \$4.00 per tonne (no change)
	100-car loads	- \$6.00 per tonne (no change)
	shuttle trains*	- \$7.00 per tonne (previously \$6.50 per tonne)

*\* A shuttle train is a dedicated train of 100 cars or more that is loaded at one facility, moved to export position, unloaded in 24 hours and returned to the next point of origin. Grain companies commit to a fixed number of trips in order to maximize the shuttle train incentive.*

The ability to fully capitalize on the efficiencies and economies of scale within the western Canadian grain handling system remains dependent upon the regulatory environment. Regulation exists in many facets of the business, despite attempts by the industry to encourage deregulation over the past five years.

The amount of revenue generated by railway companies through the grain handling system is regulated. The Canadian Wheat Board also plays a significant role in the grain transportation system, due to its monopoly over the export of western Canadian cereal grains.

The role of the CWB in grain transportation has been steadily evolving. In an effort to move to a more deregulated commercial environment, the CWB and the industry agreed in 2001 to a tendering process whereby not less than 25% of total business volumes from the CWB in 2001 and 2002 and not less than 50% in 2003 would be put to tender. Grain companies bid on the right to supply the grain and, if awarded the tender, receive railcar supply outside the regular CWB allocation process.

Tendering was limited in 2001, as most of the larger grain companies did not participate, awaiting further clarification of the rules. In 2002 and 2003, despite two years of back-to-back drought, tendering was successful in improving system efficiency. According to the CWB, the cost savings enjoyed by Prairie producers resulting from tendering and related processes such as freight and terminal rebates and performance penalties in 2002 and the first nine months of 2003 totalled \$61.5 million.

On August 7, 2003, the CWB made the decision to change its tendering program because of complaints by a number of smaller players who were having difficulty competing in the more commercialized environment. A new policy was implemented the week of October 19, 2003, reducing the tendered portion of the CWB program to 20% for fiscal 2004. The remaining 80% will revert back to an allocation formula, based on a grain company's previous 18-week producer deliveries. Approximately one-quarter of the railcars in the allocation will be awarded two weeks in advance to allow companies to more accurately plan their shipments. The Pool

believes the program changes do not encourage long-term system efficiency and will reduce the ability of grain companies to maximize their multi-car loading systems, thereby reducing the savings available to producers through rail incentives. However, the extent of the impact on the industry is yet to be fully measured. The Pool believes market share will begin to mirror a company's storage capacity, with gains being achieved at a slower rate and primarily through system consolidation. For fiscal 2004, the Pool expects Prairie market share in the range of 22% to 24%.

With respect to the company's agri-products operation, the Pool is involved at various levels of the value chain in the fertilizer business through its ownership interest in WCFL, and in the seed business beginning with seed research and development through to sales. In crop protection products, the Pool is involved through IPCO, a chemical formulation plant located in Manitoba, as well as at the retail level. The Pool's market coverage is extensive. Approximately 90% of the Pool's customers are located within 30 to 40 miles of a Pool facility.

Its interest in WCFL provides the Pool with supplies of low-cost fertilizers sourced from WCFL's 34% ownership interest in Canadian Fertilizers Limited, a fertilizer manufacturer. In addition, the Pool receives patronage dividends each year from WCFL based on the amount of fertilizer it purchases through that company.

Crop mix is an important driver in the agri-products industry as crops like wheat and barley require substantially fewer crop inputs than special crops and canola. For example, producers invest approximately \$60 per acre on a canola crop, which includes the seed that they typically purchase each year. For wheat, approximately \$20 per acre is invested, and for certain varieties, the wheat can be re-seeded from the previous year's harvest. The amount of agri-products the Pool sells is therefore dependent upon seeding intentions and the company must be flexible and timely in the purchase of its products for the heavy spring selling season.

Fertilizer pricing is also a business driver for agri-products operators. Natural gas is an important component of fertilizer and as its price fluctuates so do fertilizer prices. Producers' buying behaviour, both in terms of timing and quantity, will change depending on pricing. As a result, companies must monitor pricing to secure fertilizer at the right time and be flexible with supply to ensure the demand will be met during the application period.

The agri-products business requires substantial working capital. Over the past three years, the Pool has focused on reducing its working capital requirements in this business. The first major initiative involved the outsourcing of agri-products financing provided to producers, to Farm Credit Canada. This eliminated Pool financing, which ranged between \$100 million and \$200 million per year. At the same time, it provided producers with lower-cost, longer-term, financing to support their on-farm cash management strategies. Since 2001, the Pool has also reduced its net-owned agri-products inventory by 65% by eliminating a number of product lines and by selling and exiting product lines with lower turnover rates. This has allowed and will continue to allow our agri-products sales force to focus on products that generate higher returns.

Barriers to entry into the agri-products market are low. A significant number of smaller independent retailers already enjoy the largest share of the market. Customer service strategies that allow the Pool to bundle its seed, fertilizer and crop protection products with its financing and agronomic services will be key to retaining and growing market share in the future.

## SELECTED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### ANNUAL:

(in thousands)	<b>Pre-Restructuring**</b>		
	SIX MONTHS ENDED JULY 31, 2003	SIX MONTHS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2003 <i>(restated)</i>	TWELVE MONTHS ENDED JULY 31, 2002 <i>(restated)</i>
<b>GROSS BILLINGS</b>			
Grain sales and service revenue	\$ 255,967	\$ 496,805	\$ 917,240
Sales and service revenue - other segments	427,700	217,725	1,086,291
Sales and service revenues	683,667	714,530	2,003,531
Canadian Wheat Board gross billings	264,181	255,717	777,875
	<b>\$ 947,848</b>	<b>\$ 970,247</b>	<b>\$ 2,781,406</b>
Sales and service revenues	\$ 683,667	\$ 714,530	\$ 2,003,531
Canadian Wheat Board tariffs	14,279	16,668	50,149
Sales and other operating revenues	697,946	731,198	2,053,680
Cost of sales and operating expenses	(653,124)	(710,069)	(1,904,342)
Selling and administrative expenses	(27,204)	(24,519)	(76,526)
Non-controlling interest recovery	53	1,233	867
Earnings before interest, securitization, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA)	17,671	(2,157)	73,679
Amortization	(12,573)	(25,793)	(70,937)
Loss on disposals and provisions	-	-	(71,966)
Earnings (loss) before interest and taxes	5,098	(27,950)	(69,224)
Interest expense	(23,807)	(23,650)	(57,761)
Securitization expense	-	(3,016)	(7,796)
Loss before corporate taxes	(18,709)	(54,616)	(134,781)
Recovery of corporate taxes	2,800	20,180	42,622
Net loss	<b>\$ (15,909)</b>	<b>\$ (34,436)</b>	<b>\$ (92,159)</b>
Cash flow from (used in) operations	<b>\$ 1,856</b>	<b>\$ (26,404)</b>	<b>\$ (3,326)</b>
<b>SALES AND OTHER OPERATING REVENUES BY SEGMENT</b>			
Grain Handling and Marketing	\$ 283,737	\$ 530,392	\$ 1,015,597
Agri-products	319,347	123,198	435,938
Agri-food Processing	64,495	65,142	545,010
Other	45,177	30,460	107,797
Inter-segment sales	(14,810)	(17,994)	(50,662)
Per financial statements	<b>\$ 697,946</b>	<b>\$ 731,198</b>	<b>\$ 2,053,680</b>
<b>EBITDA BY SEGMENT</b>			
Grain Handling and Marketing	\$ (6,393)	\$ 7,169	\$ 27,655
Agri-products	29,423	(5,926)	21,827
Agri-food Processing	8,926	6,327	35,376
Other	(5,312)	(1,873)	4,449
	26,644	5,697	89,307
Corporate expenses	(8,973)	(7,854)	(15,628)
Per financial statements	<b>\$ 17,671</b>	<b>\$ (2,157)</b>	<b>\$ 73,679</b>

## QUARTERLY:

	<b>Pre-Restructuring**</b>		<b>Post-Restructuring</b>	
	OCTOBER 31	JANUARY 31	APRIL 30	JULY 31
<b>Fiscal 2003</b> (restated except July 31, 2003)				
Gross billings	\$ 469,523	\$ 500,724	\$ 310,042	\$ 637,806
Sales and service revenues	322,535	391,995	216,136	467,531
Canadian Wheat Board tariffs	10,339	6,329	5,039	9,240
Sales and other operating revenues	332,874	398,324	221,175	476,771
EBITDA	1,156	(3,313)	(7,751)	25,422
EBIT	(11,762)	(16,188)	(14,406)	19,504
Net earnings (loss)	(15,618)	(18,818)	(30,452)	14,543
Net earnings (loss) per share *	\$ (0.42)	\$ (0.50)	\$ (0.56)	\$ 0.07
<b>Pre-Restructuring**</b>				
<b>Fiscal 2002</b> (restated)				
Gross billings	\$ 673,398	\$ 774,040	\$ 549,701	\$ 784,267
Sales and service revenues	466,643	567,313	383,405	586,170
Canadian Wheat Board tariffs	13,883	13,923	10,377	11,966
Sales and other operating revenues	480,526	581,236	393,782	598,136
EBITDA	16,998	17,679	2,682	36,320
EBIT before provisions	(762)	(1,114)	(14,676)	19,294
EBIT	4,521	(23,837)	(6,958)	(42,950)
Earnings (loss) before provisions	(15,651)	(12,816)	(18,690)	5,098
Earnings (loss) per share				
before provisions	(0.42)	(0.34)	(0.50)	0.14
Net earnings (loss)	(12,394)	(25,974)	(12,696)	(41,095)
Net earnings (loss) per share *	\$ (0.33)	\$ (0.69)	\$ (0.34)	\$ (1.10)

Notes: \* Diluted earnings per share would be anti-dilutive.

\*\* Pre-restructuring refers to the consolidated financial information prior to the financial restructuring of the company, and the subsequent revaluation of the company's assets, liabilities and equity.

## SUMMARY OF CONSOLIDATED RESULTS

Because of the Pool's recent restructuring and the revaluation that was completed effective January 31, 2003, financial statements for prior periods are not comparable. Sales and EBITDA remain comparable on a 12-month basis; however, the remaining income statement items such as depreciation, interest and earnings are not comparable because of the comprehensive revaluation of assets, liabilities and equity.

## PRESENTATION OF SALES AND OTHER OPERATING REVENUES

In fiscal 2003, the Pool adopted a new Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) standard regarding recognition of revenue. This standard applies to the company's and the industry's handling of grains on behalf of the CWB. As a result, the Pool's sales and other operating revenue no longer reflect CWB gross billings. For CWB grains, the income

statement will reflect the tariffs that are received by the Pool on those purchases. For non-Board grains, the gross value of those grains and oilseeds will remain in the Sales and Other Operating Revenues category. The change also results in the classification of those amounts due from the CWB as accounts receivable as opposed to recording CWB grain as inventory, which was the previous practice. It is important to note that this change in accounting policy has no impact on the earnings or retained earnings of the company. The net effect of this change on sales is as follows:

<b>Gross Billings</b>		
(in millions)	FISCAL 2003	FISCAL 2002
Grain sales and service revenue	\$ 752.8	\$ 917.2
Sales and service revenue – other segments	645.4	1,086.3
<b>Sales and service revenues</b>	<b>1,398.2</b>	<b>2,003.5</b>
CWB gross billings (now excluded)	519.9	777.9
<b>Gross billings</b>	<b>\$ 1,918.1</b>	<b>\$ 2,781.4</b>
<b>Sales and other operating revenues</b>		
Sales and service revenues	\$ 1,398.2	\$ 2,003.5
Canadian Wheat Board tariffs	30.9	50.2
<b>Total sales and other operating revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,429.1</b>	<b>\$ 2,053.7</b>

Sales and other operating revenues of \$1.4 billion are down from the previous year by \$625 million. Approximately 70% of the variance relates to sales recorded in the 2002 fiscal year from companies that were sold in that year. The remainder relates to the impact of drought on grain handling volumes and on the quality of commodities available for export.

Partially offsetting the decline were sales increases from the Pool's Agri-products segment. Renewed moisture in the spring of 2003 drove spring fertilizer sales, while heightened grasshopper populations increased demand for crop protection products. The Agri-food Processing segment also realized sales growth due to Can-Oat's continued commitment to securing supply agreements with key food processors.

Selling and administrative expenses for fiscal 2003 were \$51.7 million, down from \$76.5 million in 2002. This primarily reflects the sale of certain businesses in 2002 as well as the Pool's continued commitment to managing its core operating costs through the last two years of drought.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, were \$15.5 million for fiscal 2003, which includes an \$11 million grain insurance recovery and compares to \$73.7 million in 2002. Approximately \$13 million or 22% of the variance against 2002 relates to companies that were sold in that year. The remainder is attributable to weather that cut western Canadian production by 45% and dramatically reduced industry shipments, combined with low pork prices in fiscal 2003 that negatively affected Heartland Pork results.

Interest and securitization expense of \$65.6 million in fiscal 2002 included \$45.7 million in interest costs associated with the Pool's consolidated operating lines, term bank debt and \$300 million in medium term notes, \$7.8 million in securitization expenses and \$12.1 million in deferred financing costs. For the six months ending January 31, 2003, prior to the restructuring, the Pool's interest and securitization costs related to this debt structure totalled \$21.1 million with an additional \$5.6 million in non-cash deferred financing costs.

Post restructuring, cash interest costs will decline considerably reflecting the new capital structure that was established effective January 31, 2003. Interest costs for the last six months of fiscal 2003 related to the financing provided by the Pool's bankers and senior subordinated noteholders, were \$23.8 million. This included \$18.1 million in cash interest and non-cash interest of \$5.7 million associated with the accretion of the senior subordinated notes and the debt component of the convertible subordinated notes. (Accretion is the accounting concept where discounted financial statement balances are increased on a systematic basis to eventually equal their face values at maturity.) Deferred financing costs were eliminated as a result of the revaluation process.

Depreciation and amortization of \$70.9 million in fiscal 2002 and \$25.8 million in the first six months of fiscal 2003 reflect the pre-restructuring asset values on the balance sheet. For the last six months of 2003, amortization was \$12.6 million primarily reflecting the amortization associated with the fair value of property, plant and equipment determined on January 31, 2003 – the fresh start application. In fiscal 2004, the company expects annual charges of approximately half the historical pre-restructuring levels.

Earnings before interest and taxes, or EBIT, for the 12 months ended July 31, 2002, were \$2.7 million, prior to losses on disposals, organizational restructuring and other provisions. For the first six months of fiscal 2003, prior to the financial restructuring, EBIT was a loss of \$28.0 million. For the last six months of fiscal 2003, the company recorded positive EBIT of \$5.1 million.

For fiscal 2002, the Pool's loss prior to disposals and other provisions was \$42.1 million and the consolidated net loss was \$92.2 million or \$2.46 per share. For the first six months of fiscal 2003, the consolidated net loss was \$34.4 million or \$0.92 per share. For the last six months of fiscal 2003, the consolidated net loss was \$15.9 million or \$0.27 per share. The calculation of earnings per share for the last six months of 2003 includes the net loss of \$15.9 million and the \$11.5 million related to the accretion of the equity component of the convertible subordinated notes and a weighted average number of Class B shares of 99.9 million.

## SEGMENT RESULTS

### GRAIN HANDLING AND MARKETING

The Pool's Grain Handling and Marketing segment shipped 4.8 million tonnes of grains and oilseeds in fiscal 2003, down 35% from the previous year. This was a direct result of the 2002 drought that slashed western Canadian production by 45%.

While the Pool's share of producer deliveries in Saskatchewan grew by one market share point during the year, the company's overall western Canadian market share finished the year at 21.1% compared to 22.8% last year. The decline reflects reductions in Saskatchewan's and Alberta's share of total production and marketings compared to non-drought areas of Manitoba where the Pool's presence is less pronounced.

#### **Annual Volumes to July 31**

(thousands of tonnes)	FISCAL 2003	FISCAL 2002	INCREASE/(DECREASE)
Primary elevator shipments	4,760	7,316	-35%
Terminal operations			
Vancouver	822	2,155	-62%
Thunder Bay	1,185	1,232	-4%
Share of affiliates	424	611	-31%
<b>Total terminal operations</b>	<b>2,431</b>	<b>3,998</b>	<b>-39%</b>

Industry exports for the year totalled 12.6 million tonnes, down 41% from the previous year, and less than half the level achieved in 2001. Port terminal receipts were down 42% for the industry, 59% through Vancouver. The temporary closure of that port last fall, along with decreased CWB grain shipments from West Coast draw areas, were the primary factors in the 62% decline in receipts at the Pool's Vancouver terminal.

EBITDA from this segment for fiscal 2003 was a loss of \$1 million compared to earnings of \$28 million in fiscal 2002. The variance was attributable to large volume declines and lower margins resulting from poor crop quality. EBIT from this segment in 2002, prior to provisions was a loss of \$5.3 million reflecting the drought in that year. For the first six months of fiscal 2003, prior to restructuring, EBIT was a loss of \$7.7 million, which included amortization of \$14.9 million. For the last six months of the year, EBIT was a loss of \$11 million including \$4.6 million in amortization expense.

### AGRI-PRODUCTS

Agri-products sales for the year grew by \$7 million to \$443 million driven by a 17.6% increase in fertilizer sales due to higher prices, partially offset by lower crop protection product sales in the fall due to wet weather.

EBITDA for the full year was \$23.5 million, which compares to \$21.8 million in fiscal 2002. The 2002 results included an additional \$5.9 million of service charge revenue associated with an in-house agri-products financing program that has since been outsourced. Excluding those service charges, EBITDA grew 47% due to higher sales volumes in the final six months of the year resulting from an enhanced focus on new pricing strategies, customer solutions and margin improvements, particularly in fertilizer and seed.

EBIT for the segment in fiscal 2002 was \$10.2 million, prior to provisions. For the first six months of fiscal 2003, EBIT, after amortization of \$3.7 million, was a loss of \$9.6 million. In the final six months of the year, the segment earned \$25.0 million before interest and taxes, a reflection of strong demand during the growing season for all major product lines. Included in the final six-month period was \$4.4 million in amortization. The increase in amortization between the two six-month periods reflects the revaluation of assets.

### AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

The Agri-food Processing segment generated sales for the full year of \$130 million versus \$128 million, after excluding the fiscal 2002 results of companies that were sold in that year. The increase was driven by a 6% sales improvement at Can-Oat Milling, which more than offset an 8% decline at Prairie Malt Limited.

EBITDA for the full year was \$15.3 million, which compares to \$23.1 million the previous year, after excluding companies sold in 2002. Can-Oat's performance remained relatively strong while Prairie Malt experienced margin declines due to depleted supplies of quality malt barley in Western Canada, which forced them to source raw commodities from other regions to meet customer demands.

EBIT for the segment in 2002, prior to the loss on disposal, was \$20.3 million. After excluding companies that were sold in 2002, EBIT for the year would have been \$15.8 million. In 2003, the Pool's Agri-food Processing segment generated EBIT of \$3.8 million in

the first six months and an additional \$6.4 million in the final six months of the year. There was no significant variance in amortization charges in the two periods.

## OTHER

Sales for the entire segment in fiscal 2003 totalled \$75.6 million, down from \$107.8 million with the decrease representing the sale of feed mills and a newspaper publishing company in fiscal 2002. Heartland Pork marketed 360,000 hogs in fiscal 2003, down slightly from 370,000 last year.

The segment produced an EBITDA loss of \$7 million for the full year, which compares to earnings of \$4 million last year. Segment EBIT in 2002 was a loss prior to disposal of \$5.3 million. In fiscal 2003, the segment had an EBIT loss of \$6.3 million in the first six months, which included \$4.4 million in amortization. For the final six months, the loss was \$6.4 million, which included \$1.1 million of amortization expense. The primary reason for the poor results for this segment was a combination of extremely low hog prices and higher feed costs that led to poor margins for the year.

## LIQUIDITY AND CAPITAL RESOURCES

### Fresh Start Accounting - Balance Sheet Adjustments

The company successfully completed the restructuring of its senior secured debt in the third quarter. The financial reorganization has been accounted for using the principles of fresh start accounting with an effective date of January 31, 2003. Under this treatment, the Pool was required to adjust the value of its assets and liabilities to estimated fair values to reflect the fair value of its equity.

Following is a summary of the long-term debt outstanding as reflected on the January 31, 2003, balance sheet:

<b>Long-term debt:</b>		
(in thousands)	PRINCIPAL AMOUNT	JANUARY 31, 2003 BALANCE SHEET
Senior bank debt	\$100,000	\$100,000
Senior subordinated debt <sup>1</sup> (81%)	\$150,000	121,500
Convertible subordinated notes - debt component <sup>2</sup>		22,234
Other long-term debt	\$ 29,673	29,673
		<u>\$ 273,407</u>

Following is a summary of the equity outstanding as reflected on the January 31, 2003, balance sheet:

<b>Shareholders' equity:</b>	
(in thousands)	
Convertible subordinated notes - principal amount <sup>3</sup>	\$255,000
Less portion allocated to issued share capital	(8,487)
Less fair value adjustment (30%)	(68,013)
Less debt component	<u>(22,234)</u>
	156,266
Class B non-voting shares (60,363,256 outstanding at \$0.37/share)	22,335
	<u>\$ 178,601</u>

<sup>1</sup> The difference between the principal amount of the senior subordinated notes and the fair values recorded on the balance sheet will be accreted over their life as interest expense (non-cash).

<sup>2</sup> The present value of the interest payments that may become due on the convertible subordinated notes in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (should the company meet certain financial thresholds) has been recorded as long-term debt on the balance sheet. This component will accrete up to the amount of the interest payments that may become due. The accretion will be charged to interest expense (non-cash). The financial thresholds are based on cumulative consolidated EBITDA less cumulative consolidated cash interest expense (excluding interest on the convertible subordinated notes but including securitization interest expense) from fiscal 2003 up to and including the test year.

<u>Test Year</u>	<u>Threshold</u>
2006	\$235 million
2007	\$340 million
2008	\$450 million

If the threshold is exceeded, then interest that accrued during the test year, to the extent of the excess, will be paid in cash on December 31 of the subsequent test year. For greater certainty, in the event that the threshold is exceeded in any test year, interest accrued for any prior year will not under any circumstances become cash payable but will continue to be accrued.

For the 2008 test year, the cash interest payable (if any) would be payable at maturity (November 30, 2008). For greater certainty, any such cash interest payable could not be converted into equity by the company pursuant to its general right of conversion of all principal and accrued interest on that date.

<sup>3</sup> The convertible subordinated note is recorded as equity on the balance sheet given the company's right and ability to convert the notes to equity upon maturity. Based on current expectations, the company believes it is likely to convert the notes to voting equity shares in November 2008. The equity portion of the convertible subordinated notes will be accreted over the life of the instrument to the principal amount plus accrued (non-cash) interest, with this accretion recorded as an adjustment to retained earnings.

Fixed assets were revalued using the discounted cash flow method and to align with the new equity and debt values. Goodwill has been entirely eliminated, as is general practice in comprehensive revaluations.

Further details with respect to the restructuring are provided in Note 2 to the consolidated financial statements.

### Working Capital

The new accounting policy that requires companies to record revenue associated with the purchases of Board grains from producers on a net basis (see Summary of Consolidated Results – Presentation of Sales and Other Operating Revenues), results in the classification of those amounts due from the CWB as accounts receivable as opposed to the CWB grain being recorded as inventory, which was the previous practice. This change resulted in an increase in accounts receivable and a corresponding decrease in inventory at January 31, 2003 of \$101 million. At July 31, 2003, the adjustment was \$113 million.

Current assets were \$398 million at July 31, down \$38 million from January 31. A decrease of \$69 million in inventory and \$13 million in cash in trust was partially offset by an increase of \$17 million in short-term investments held by joint ventures and a \$26 million increase in accounts receivable. Lower inventories were mainly due to lower levels of non-Board grain in stock. The increase in accounts receivable relates primarily to amounts due from the CWB. The current ratio was 1.31 at July 31 compared to 1.30 at January 31.

As part of the financial restructuring, the company obtained a \$240 million asset-backed revolving credit facility with its bankers to finance working capital needs. Drawings on the facility at July 31 were \$118 million including \$25 million related to letters of credit and similar instruments required to operate an agri-business. Availability under the facility is determined by reference to the level of inventories and accounts receivable. An additional \$43 million was available to draw on the facility as at July 31, 2003.

### Cash Flow Information

Cash flow from operations was \$1.9 million for the six months ending July 31, 2003, and cash flow used in operations was \$26.4 million for the six months ending January 31, 2003. These results reflect the impact of significant volume decreases due to drought.

Although grain deliveries for fiscal 2004 will fall short of normal levels, cash flow from operations is expected to improve significantly in fiscal 2004.

Capital expenditures were \$2.4 million for the six months ended July 31, 2003, and were \$3.4 million for the six months ended January 31, 2003. Capital expenditures are expected to increase to approximately \$20 million for fiscal 2004 and will be primarily directed toward maintenance spending.

### Total Debt

(in millions)	JULY 31, 2003	JANUARY 31, 2003
Bank indebtedness and short-term borrowings	\$121	\$138
Member demand loans and shares	11	8
Long-term debt due in one year	8	7
<b>Total short-term debt</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>153</b>
Bank term loan	91	100
Senior subordinated note	125	121
Convertible subordinated note - debt component	24	22
Members' term loans	5	5
Subsidiaries and proportionate share of joint venture debt	21	25
<b>Total long-term debt</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>\$406</b>	<b>\$426</b>

The bank term loan decreased by approximately \$9 million during the six months ended July 31, 2003, due to a repayment from the proceeds of certain asset sales in accordance with the credit agreement with the company's bankers.

Interest is payable monthly on the bank term loan. Under the terms of the loan agreement, blended payments of interest and principal commence on October 1, 2004, if certain EBITDA thresholds are met. Otherwise these payments commence October 1, 2005. Given the smaller than normal harvest this fall and low carryout of grain stocks, no principal repayments are expected to be made on this loan until October 2005.

Interest is paid monthly into a trust and distributed quarterly to the holders of the senior subordinated notes. No principal payments are due until maturity on November 29, 2008.

The Pool's total debt-to-equity ratio at July 31, 2003, was 71:29 (January 31, 2003 – 71:29) and its long-term debt-to-equity ratio was 63:37 (January 31, 2003 – 61:39).

### Convertible Subordinated Notes

Convertible subordinated notes with a principal value of \$255 million were issued under the Pool's financial restructuring initiative. Each \$1,000 of notes is convertible, at the option of the holder, into approximately 2,227 shares at any time prior to the November 30, 2008, maturity date. Conversions of the notes to July 31, 2003, were as follows:

(in thousands)	CONVERTIBLE NOTES FACE VALUE	CLASS B SHARES
Outstanding January 31, 2003	\$255,000	60,363
Conversions to July 31, 2003	(50,172)	111,744
	<u>\$204,828</u>	<u>172,107</u>

At maturity, the Pool has the right to convert, subject to certain conditions, the convertible subordinated notes into shares of a single class of voting common shares of the company that represents 90% of the outstanding shares of such class on a fully diluted basis, provided that any payments to or conversions by holders of such notes into Class B non-voting shares prior to maturity proportionately reduces this 90% conversion ratio.

On the July 31, 2003 balance sheet, \$131 million of the convertible subordinated notes has been classified as equity and \$24 million has been classified as debt. The difference between these amounts and the par value of the convertible subordinated note of \$205 million is being accreted over its remaining life.

### Debt Ratings

The following debt ratings have been assigned by Dominion Bond Rating Services and Standard and Poors (previous rating in brackets – NR means not rated, SD means selective default):

RATING AGENCY	CORPORATE RATING	BANK DEBT	SENIOR NOTE	CONVERTIBLE NOTE
Dominion Bond Rating Services	B stable (NR)	NR (C)	B low (C)	NR (NR)
Standard and Poors	B stable (SD)	B (D)	CCC+ (D)	CCC+ (NR)

### Defined Benefit Pension Plan Surplus

The company's defined benefit pension plans had a combined surplus of \$37.1 million at July 31, 2003. The current service cost for these plans is expected to be approximately \$1.1 million for the year ending July 31, 2004. No employer contributions are expected to be made to these plans in fiscal 2004.

## LOOKING FORWARD

For fiscal 2004, the grain available to the elevator system in Western Canada is expected to increase from the previous year to 26 million tonnes, but still remain below the 33 million in a normal year. This is a result of crop production levels that are estimated to finish 15%

below the five-year average due to sustained heat during August, in addition to a percentage that producers will hold back and carry into 2005 fiscal year to replenish grain reserves. The Pool expects its shipments to range from six to seven million tonnes for the year and remains optimistic that weather conditions in the spring will support a normal agri-products sales season. Management believes that fiscal 2004 earnings and cash flow will recover significantly based on these assumptions; however, the extent of the recovery remains dependent upon moisture levels and weather conditions throughout the agri-products sales season next spring.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

As part of its business environment, the Pool faces certain risks, which include weather, strategic, market, financial restriction, regulatory, credit, foreign exchange, property and liability, and environmental risks, as well as those arising from its reliance on computerized business systems. These risks are managed in a variety of ways.

### **Governance and Oversight**

The company's Risk Management Committee (the Committee) is responsible for assessing enterprise risks and implementing strategies to reduce the company's exposure. It is a senior management committee with the mandate to implement an enterprise risk management program for the company that contributes to maximizing shareholder value. The Committee meets regularly to assess risks and direct risk mitigation activities designed to ensure achievement of the Pool's objectives. Regular reports are provided to the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors.

### **Weather Risk**

The Pool's most significant risk, as an agri-business operator, is the weather. The effects of weather conditions on crop quality and production as well as Canadian export levels of grains and oilseeds present significant operating and financial risk to the Pool since volume is one of the major drivers of performance in the Grain Handling and Marketing segment. The level and mix of agri-product sales are also dependent on weather, as well as commodity price expectations and projected supplies of grain in Western Canada. These factors determine crop selection by producers at seeding time, which drives demand for agri-products. Crop selection decisions are critical since certain crops require significantly more inputs than other crops. The Pool's agri-products group works closely with its grain group to assist in anticipating producers' seeding intentions and managing agri-product inventories accordingly.

The Pool has mitigated its exposure to weather with the expansion of its grain handling and agri-products business into Alberta and Manitoba. Having facilities in these two provinces, where half of Western Canada's grain is grown, should help to reduce weather-related production risks and provide additional marketing and transportation options. Handling of open market grains and special crops is also expected to help mitigate the risk of year-to-year production changes and export shifts between Board and non-Board grains.

### Strategic Risk

The Pool's vertical integration through certain agri-food processing businesses, while providing alternative revenue sources and opportunities for higher returns, exposes the Pool to market risks and other factors associated with such businesses.

### Market Risk

A significant portion of the company's sales are derived from its Grain Handling and Marketing segment. Earnings for this segment fluctuate substantially based on the volume of grain handled and the margin earned on the purchase and sale of non-Board grains. In the case of Board grain, the Pool earns storage and handling tariffs from the CWB, which are established independently of the market price for grain.

The Pool ships Board grain – wheat and barley sold by or on behalf of the CWB – into the export and domestic markets. For these grains, the company's risks are reduced in part through the terms of formal legal arrangements between the Pool and the CWB. The arrangements provide for full reimbursement of the price paid to producers for grain as well as certain costs incurred by the Pool. Adverse impacts may be experienced by the company where its handling of Board grain results in a loss of grade or, in the case of the CWB's tendering program, if the Pool fails to meet the requirements under the tendering contract. The Pool participates in the CWB Accredited Exporter Program. Risk of commodity price movement is reduced for grain handled under this program, which is structured as a flow-through of product to the end-use customer.

For other grains and oilseeds that it purchases, the Pool faces the risk of movement in price between the time the grain is purchased and the time that it is sold. Hedging, where such opportunities exist, reduces this risk. Hedging is the placing of an opposite position in the futures market to that held in the cash market to minimize the risk of financial loss from an adverse price change.

The Pool maintains, to the extent possible, a fully hedged position on all non-Board grain purchases and sales. This is accomplished by hedging all purchases and sales of non-Board grains through regulated futures markets. Because of the size of future contracts and certain time constraints, it may not be possible to be fully hedged at all times. In order to avoid material risk to its earnings, the Pool has employed the use of position limits. Special crops are more difficult to hedge, as no regulated futures market exists for these commodities and the hedging instruments available lack liquidity. Where possible, financial exposure to unhedged purchases and sales is reduced by back-to-back buying and selling.

### Financial Restrictions

The credit agreement with the company's bankers and the Trust Indenture for the senior subordinated notes and the convertible subordinated notes contain provisions that require the company to comply with certain financial restrictions. The Pool is required to meet certain financial tests including minimum levels of cash flow, a minimum current ratio and a maximum annual level of capital expenditures. In addition, these agreements limit the ability of the company and its subsidiaries to incur additional indebtedness and make additional investments.

The company's ability to comply with these agreements may be affected by events beyond its control. The company may require the consent of its lenders to undertake certain transactions

such as mergers or the sale of assets or businesses. Substantially all of the company's assets have been pledged to secure the existing funded debt of the company.

### Regulatory Risk

Risks and uncertainties associated with world grain markets, including World Trade Organization rules and compliance with the 1994 GATT agreement, economic conditions, economic aid and political stability in importing nations, economic conditions and political stability in producing nations and the level of trade subsidies provided by governments to producers in grain exporting nations all have an effect on the Canadian grain industry, the company and its producers.

### Credit Risk

The Pool is exposed to credit risk in connection with credit provided to its customers. The Pool manages credit risk through adherence to its established Credit and Collection policies. These policies cover the Pool's agri-products and commercial grain credit facilities, as well as the credit facilities for Can-Oat and the Heartland Group of Companies.

The Credit Policy dictates that all credit customers must apply for credit privileges and receive an approved credit limit prior to any extension of credit. It also sets out the terms and conditions of continuing credit sales. The Collection Policy provides the framework that details the timely and systematic approach to collections of any past due accounts. Any exceptions to the Credit and Collection policies require the written approval of the Pool's executive management. It is the responsibility of all divisions to take steps to help ensure that sufficient and appropriate systems, procedures and practices are in place to facilitate, maintain, monitor and report on compliance with the policies.

The Pool has actively pursued a payment and country risk minimization strategy for offshore customers through the use of export financing arrangements, strategic business alliances and country risk reporting. Export financing payment arrangements include cash prior to unloading, cash against documents and obtaining confirmed letters of credit.

The discovery of a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in northern Alberta was announced on May 20, 2003. All countries immediately closed the border to Canadian cattle and beef, although a few, including the United States, have since opened the border to beef from younger animals. Cattle and beef prices in Canada have declined substantially and are not expected to return to pre-BSE levels for years to come. This will reduce producers' cash flow and could affect the level of agri-products purchases, in addition to increasing the risks associated with producers' credit.

### Foreign Exchange Risk

Significant portions of Can-Oat's oat products and the Pool's non-Board grains are sold into the export market and are priced in U.S. dollars. Can-Oat and the Pool hedge substantially all foreign currency transactions using options, futures currency contracts or forward exchange contracts, and through the use of natural hedges created by offsetting transactions.

### Property and Liability Risk

The Pool, directly or through its affiliate, Canadian Pool Agencies Ltd., conducts annual risk management reviews of each of its operating divisions and wholly owned subsidiaries to ensure that appropriate insurance coverage and loss prevention measures are in place to limit the property and liability risks faced by the company. As part of the review, all major facilities are inspected and loss prevention programs are discussed with managers of each facility. The Pool retains Canadian Pool Agencies Ltd. as its agent and broker in placing insurance coverage for its facilities.

The Pool's policy is to manage its risks so that the company's financial position is protected. It has insurance policies that cover a variety of property and liability insurance needs.

### Environmental Risk

The Pool is subject to a number of federal and provincial laws and regulations relating to the environment and the transportation, handling and storage of hazardous substances such as certain crop protection products. In compliance with the Pool's commercial environmental policy, all properties have environmental site assessments conducted upon acquisition and divestiture. Periodic audits are completed for all facilities and an annual status report is prepared. The Pool responds to inquiries from producers and the public and provides information regarding environmental trends, legislation and impending standards related to agriculture and food production and processing. As a result of its involvement in the hog production business, the company has established an environmental protocol to govern those intensive livestock operations.

There can be no assurance that environmental requirements will not change in the future, that unanticipated environmental remediation will not be required or that the Pool will not incur significant costs in the future in complying with such requirements.

### Computerized Business Systems

The Pool places significant reliance on information technology. Its computer systems include custom-developed and purchased business applications, both for information and processing, and embedded systems, which support ongoing administrative and commercial operations. In addition, the Pool relies upon telecommunications services to interface with its widely distributed business network and customers. The information and embedded systems of key business partners and regulatory agencies, including railway companies, the CWB and the Canadian Grain Commission, are also important to the Pool's operations.

The Pool has centralized the majority of these systems in its data center and mitigates the risk of interruption by contracting business resumption services to a third-party service provider. Increased emphasis on operational performance of the Pool's custom-developed applications has improved reliability and availability.

### EBIT AND EBITDA DATA

The EBIT and EBITDA data provided herein is intended to provide further insight with respect to the company's financial results, including its results on a segment-by-segment basis and to supplement its earnings (loss) as determined in accordance with GAAP. The Pool's method of calculating EBIT and EBITDA may not be comparable to other companies in the industry.

EBIT should therefore not be used as an alternative to net earnings (loss) as determined in accordance with GAAP. Similarly, EBITDA should not be used as an alternative to cash provided by operating activities as determined in accordance with GAAP.

## **FORWARD LOOKING INFORMATION**

Certain statements in this annual report and this Management's Discussion and Analysis are forward-looking and reflect the Pool's expectations regarding future results of operations, financial condition and achievements. Such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, performance and achievements of the Pool to be materially different from any future results, performance and achievements expressed or implied by those forward-looking statements. A number of factors could cause actual results to differ materially from expectations, including producers' decisions regarding total seeded acreage, crop selection, and utilization levels of farm inputs such as fertilizers and crop protection products; weather conditions; Canadian grain export levels; changes in government policy and transportation deregulation; world agricultural commodity prices and markets; changes in competitive forces including pricing pressures; and global political and economic conditions, including grain subsidy actions of the United States and the European Union.