

Henry Wise Wood

“I’d sooner be president of the UFA than the USA.”

The “Moses of Alberta farmers” was a frugal man who moved from the United States to Alberta in 1905. As unvarnished as an Alberta Wheat Pool grain elevator, Wood owned one grey suit at a time. It hung lonely in his closet; he replaced it only when it wore out.

Farmers who felt at the mercy of wheat prices, elevator companies and the railway, formed the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), hoping that collective action would give them voice. Wood helped to fan this agrarian revolt. He believed that farmers needed a fair price system, relief from debt, and power over the marketplace.

Wood headed the UFA for 16 years. No one would run against him because, while other farm leaders raked in \$20,000 a year, he took only a modest \$2,000. With his guidance, the three prairie wheat pools became the largest agrarian cooperative in the world.

When the UFA entered provincial politics, they were elected in a landslide victory. Wood refused to become premier, but never had farmers held power for so long - from 1921 to 1935.



Henry Wise Wood
Glenbow Archives NA-1893-1

The Alberta Wheat Pool

In the dwindling days of the summer of 1923, Alberta farmers were presented with a proposition: join the Alberta Wheat Pool.

Henry Wise Wood and other recruiters promoted the wheat pool as a way to ensure farmers would receive fair and stable grain prices. Wood believed if farmers handled all the sales through a central agency, the producers' marketplace selling power would increase. On the closing day of the two-week campaign, 45 percent of Alberta's wheat acreage had been committed to the pool.

Wood was chairman of the Alberta Wheat Pool from 1923 until 1937. By the late 1920s the three prairie pools (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) had become the largest agrarian co-operative in the world, handling approximately 50 percent of prairie grain.

Born: May 31, 1860 – Died: June 10, 1941

Additional Resources

- **Alberta Champions Society**
<https://albertachampions.org/Champions/henry-wise-wood-1860-1941/>

Our Collections

Glenbow Museum

<https://www.glenbow.org>

Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>