Uses attract some

Cuba buying $1 million in N.D. peas

By DAVE KOLPACK
Associated Press Writer

FARGO — Cuba has agreed to buy more than $1 million worth of yellow peas from North Dakota, while industry officials said a new trade proposal could change future negotiations.

A North Dakota trade delegation secured a deal in October to sell 5,000 metric tons of peas to Cuba, with a verbal agreement for an additional 20,000 metric tons.

A contract was completed last week for about 10,000 metric tons to be shipped early next year, the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Association said.

State Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson said the agreement was negotiated by Larry White, the marketing director for the association.

"That’s a big win," Johnson said. "They went down there on their own and were able to make an impact."

Earlier efforts by North Dakota delegations had allowed the state to establish strong trade relations with Cuba, White said.

"There’s a track record in place."

Johnson and White said negotiations were made more difficult by a Bush administration proposal on currency exchange. State officials are unsure if they can continue to use a third party to broker deals without advancing payment.

"The new policy suggests that the bank would have to be paid before the goods are even shipped," Johnson said. "We can’t continue to do business with any other country that way."

North Dakota is the nation’s leading producer of dry edible peas. The state produces about 123,000 metric tons a year, a figure that likely increase with the Cuba deal, White said.

"The United States only supplies about 50 percent of what Cuba buys around the world," White said.

Johnson said the proposed administration changes, deals are

Jenkinson has worked well, said Randy Krall, chief of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s Wildlife Division.

He said Bismarck hasn’t had any safety issues since allowing bow hunting on the east but signs were posted this year prohibiting hunting.

Cass County Engineer Keith Block posted signs after the property was being used for hunting.

A similar bow hunting