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## GW head raps release of figures

By LYNN HEINZE  
Tribune Staff Writer

The president of the Great Western Sugar Co. has charged area sugar beet growers' representatives with "base disregard" of an agreement to keep confidential a purity committee report until early next year.

Jack Powell, president of GWS, accused grower leaders Vern Palsler, former president of the Nebraska Non-stock Beet Growers Association, and Kish Otsuka, president of the Mountain

States Beet Growers Association with violating an agreement made Wednesday.

In a prepared statement, Powell said Palsler allowed a report to be made to the Nebraska group Thursday night during its annual meeting in Scottsbluff. "The release of the purity committee's report was a base disregard of an agreement between the company and the growers' leaders," Powell said in the release. Powell wasn't available for comment Monday morning.

Powell said the company and the

growers had mutually agreed to withhold the purity report until after another joint meeting slated for Jan. 4. The purity committee, made up of representatives picked by both growers and the company, have studied the purity question which the company claimed was at the heart of contracting difficulties for this year's crop.

Negotiations for the 1976 crop broke early and growers and the company came to agreement only after both sides were called to the governor's mansion for

an all-night session which yielded a contract in mid-April.

According to Powell, Robert Owen, who earlier headed grower efforts to purchase the beet processing company and currently a member of the purity group, appeared at the annual meeting of the Nebraska beet growers.

"That Palsler permitted Robert Owen's appearance to disclose and discuss the report...is beyond comprehension. Owen was a member of the purity committee. He had a role in naming numbers. Only time can assess the damage he may have

done by his premature and apparently biased discussion with growers..." Powell said.

In response to the charges leveled by Powell, Otsuka told the Tribune: "At a time when grower leaders are considering the purity report, it is unfortunate the Great Western Sugar Co. felt compelled to go to the press with allegations which may or may not be true.

"As far as violating an agreement is concerned, I personally have not violated any agreement.

"If the company is seeking cooperation it should act in a more responsible manner than shown by resorting to this method which will widen, rather than reduce the division between the growers and the company," Otsuka said.

Powell said in his statement: "Most growers want to do the right thing on the purity matter. They recognize that the entire sugar beet industry, growers and processors, is in deep trouble. Cooperation, not division, is needed now if we are going to pull things out."