

SUCCESS OF TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP HINGES ON INCREASED MARKET ACCESS

OTTAWA (ON) February 20, 2014 – Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) is looking to see increased market access for Canadian agricultural products at this week's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade talks in Singapore.

Canada's agriculture sector exported over \$40 billion in 2011. TPP member countries represent 51% of Canada's agri-food exports.

"For Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry to benefit from TPP, we need to increase Canadian exports to TPP member countries," said CAFTA President Lisa Skierka. "The way to make this happen is for all countries—including our own—to cut tariffs and limit exceptions for sensitive products."

CAFTA representatives are at the TPP trade talks in Singapore because increased market access to Canadian exports is critical to the prosperity of the close to 500,000 Canadians we directly employ. In total, CAFTA represents 80 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports.

"Making significant exceptions for sensitive products could quickly lead to substantial erosion of the potential benefits of the agreement, as all other parties inevitably seek to protect more of their own sensitive sectors," said Skierka. "This also sets a dangerous precedent for future TPP entrants as they will each in turn seek to negotiate further exemptions."

In addition to creating a more fair trading environment, Skierka is optimistic that Rules of Origin will be addressed proactively in the TPP.

"Rules of Origin must be facilitative to trade and strongly support the elimination of tariffs," said Skierka. "Otherwise, this agreement will simply not be effective long-term."

CAFTA believes agricultural and agri-food market access schedules within the TPP should be plurilateral so all countries would receive the same tariff phase out period and reduction in tariffs for each tariff line. This is a fundamental competitiveness objective for CAFTA amongst the existing and future membership of the TPP.

CAFTA is a coalition of national and regional organizations that support a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food. CAFTA's members include producer organizations, processors, marketers and exporters from the major trade dependent sectors in Canada. Together, these sectors produce almost 80 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports, conduct about \$40 billion in business annually and directly employ close to 500,000 Canadians.

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