

CAFTA APPLAUDS CANADA–KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

New trade deal means greater prosperity for agriculture and agri-food sector

OTTAWA, (ON) March 11, 2014 – Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) welcomes the announcement of a Canada–Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) released today.

“CAFTA applauds the Government of Canada’s tenacity in completing a Canada–Korea Free Trade Agreement,” said CAFTA President Lisa Skierka. “This FTA will make a real difference for Canadians, and the agriculture value chain, from farmers and ranchers to processors and exporters.”

For several years, CAFTA has been urging the federal government to conclude the FTA with South Korea. As recently as February 10, CAFTA joined 30 companies and organizations calling on the federal government and the provinces to accelerate efforts and complete negotiations for this strategic FTA.

"Canada's meat processors thank and congratulate the Government of Canada for its steadfast perseverance and courage in bringing these crucial negotiations to a successful conclusion," said Arnold Drung, President of the Canadian Meat Council.

“For the past few years, Canada’s key beef competitor, the United States, has enjoyed an increasing tariff advantage flowing from its FTA with South Korea, and Australia is poised to do likewise through their recent agreement with Korea. Their gain has been our loss,” said Dave Solverson, President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association. “Today’s announcement means Canadian beef will be able to once again compete for meaningful access in the Korean market.”

“This announcement is good news,” said Wade Sobkowich, Executive Director of the Western Grain Elevator Association. “In 2012, Canadian grain exports to Korea were \$479 million a year. Today, they are less than \$100 million. Now, with the FTA announcement, we can look at rebuilding our presence in the Korean market.”

CAFTA members agree that the FTA with Korea is important to Canada’s growth and prosperity.

“The Canada–Korea FTA will be critical to future growth of the Canadian pork industry, 70 per cent of which is dependent on export markets,” added Jean-Guy Vincent, Chair of the Canadian Pork Council.

“Korea is a lucrative market of 50 million consumers and a key hub of Asian supply chains,” said Jim Everson, V.P. Government Relations, Canola Council of Canada. “Stable and open trade is a priority of the Canadian canola industry, which exports over 90 per cent of its annual production; the agreement will deliver this.”

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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