

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL TRADE MISSION TO CHINA OPENS DOOR TO FUTURE PROSPERITY

Historic trade mission to China promotes Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector

OTTAWA, (ON) June 16, 2014 – Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) is optimistic this week's agricultural trade mission to China, led by Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz, will create new export opportunities. CAFTA members are part of a delegation of more than 70 participants accompanying Minister Ritz on possibly the largest agricultural trade mission of its kind.

"China is a rapidly growing market for Canadian agriculture and agri-food exports," said CAFTA President Lisa Skierka. "Sales of agricultural products to China were approximately \$5.2 billion in 2013. China's growing demand for agriculture and food products makes it an extremely valuable trading partner."

China, Canada's second-largest export market after the United States, is an important and stable customer for Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. Chief among Canadian agri-exports is the sale of canola products, which account for half of all agricultural exports to China. In 2013, canola products generated sales valued at \$2.83 billion.

"China is a very important and growing market for Canadian canola," said Canola Council of Canada President Patti Miller, "so we strongly support Minister Ritz's efforts to promote Canadian agricultural products and to secure predictable market access."

Canadian exports of agriculture and agri-food are critical to the prosperity of close to 500,000 Canadians our members directly employ. In total, CAFTA represents 80 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports.

"The Chinese market is one of great importance for the Canadian pork industry, with sales in 2013 exceeding a quarter of a billion dollars, making China our third largest customer last year," stated Canadian Pork Council Chair Jean-Guy Vincent. "The federal government has worked tirelessly to grow this important market for our products, and trade missions to China help to further strengthen this growing business relationship."

"The beef and pork sectors applaud the efforts of the federal government to facilitate this week's trade mission," added Jim Laws, Executive Director of the Canadian Meat Council, who has joined the Minister's trade mission as representative of the Canadian meat industry. "Advancing our bilateral trade interests with China, Canada's second largest single-nation trading partner after the United States, is key to the future prosperity of the meat processing industry which employs 65,000 workers and adds value to the live animals born and raised on Canadian farms, providing a critical market outlet and supporting the viability of thousands of livestock farmers."

The export of Canadian meat, particularly beef, is growing exponentially.

“The occasion of the World Meat Congress and meeting of the International Meat Secretariat in Beijing is an excellent opportunity for Minister Ritz to promote Canadian beef in China,” said Canadian Cattlemen’s Association President Dave Solverson, a beef producer from Camrose, Alberta. “Canadian beef exports to China have grown rapidly since 2012. Some forecasts we’ve seen indicate China could further double its global beef imports in the next four or five years.”

Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sector welcomes the opportunity to fulfill the import needs of this growing market.

“Canadian barley has a great opportunity to capitalize on the Chinese market,” said Barley Council of Canada Executive Director Brett Campbell. “We have the world-class quality feed, malt and food barley that China will need, and we are ready to deliver.”

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.

-30-

For further information contact:
Janet Hueglin Hartwick
Communications Consultant, CAFTA
905.536.6123