

Statement by Canada's Leading Agricultural Exporters on NAFTA Progress

August 31, 2018 – *Brian Innes, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today issued the following statement on news of progress on NAFTA negotiations.*

“On behalf of our members – the hundreds of thousands of farmers, ranchers, food processors and agri-food exporters who rely on trade for their livelihood – news that progress is made in the NAFTA negotiations is reassuring; we welcome efforts to restore certainty for farmers and agri-food exporters. However, there are questions that remain on the outcomes in a final deal and much work remains to get there.”

“Modernizing rules for keeping access to the North American market through NAFTA is critical for Canada’s world-class agri-food exporters; we’ve been clear that the Canadian government must preserve and enhance this agreement so that our industry can remain globally competitive.”

“However, for NAFTA to be truly modernized, real progress needs to be achieved in eliminating remaining tariffs and other barriers that restrict our exports to the U.S. and Mexico. Canadian agri-food products still face a number of barriers when entering the U.S. market such as unjustified meat inspections, very restrictive quotas on sugar and processed food containing sugar, as well as tariffs on further processed vegetable oil products.”

“We also need to ensure that a modernized NAFTA maintains robust dispute resolution mechanisms and that processes are in place that can address issues before they stifle cross-border trade.”

“NAFTA has been an incredible success for the agri-food sector throughout North America. Since 1988, Canada’s agri-food exports to the US have grown by more than fivefold and imports from the US have grown more than six fold. Since 1993, trade with Mexico has increased eightfold largely driven by agri-food trade. Furthermore, NAFTA has encouraged highly integrated supply chains which has made North America globally competitive and contributed to economic growth, jobs and new opportunities for people in all three countries.”

“In the coming days and weeks, we look forward to more details and will be counting on the Canadian government to work with Canada’s agri-food exporters to resolve tariff and technical barriers to trade so that modernization efforts truly capitalize on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring NAFTA into the 21st century.”

CAFTA is the voice of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters, representing the 90% of farmers who depend on trade and the ranchers, producers, processors and agri-food exporters who want to grow the economy through better access to international markets. This includes the beef, pork, meat, grains, cereals, pulses, soybeans, canola as well as the sugar, malt, and processed food industries. The sectors CAFTA represents support over a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.

For further information, please contact:

Claire Citeau

Executive Director

T: 613-560-0500 / C: 613-266-9104

cciteau@cafta.org