

Statement by Canada's Agri-food Exporters on United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

Ottawa, ON – October 1, 2018 - Brian Innes, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today issued the following statement regarding the new United-States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

"We welcome an agreement to renew NAFTA. Free and fair trade has made our agri-food exporters globally competitive. We're very pleased that free and fair trade of North American agri-food products will continue.

An agreement is an important step forward for the hundreds of thousands of farmers, ranchers, food manufacturers and agri-food exporters who rely on free and open trade and have felt the impact of continued uncertainty.

At first glance, there will be some improved access for Canada's agri-food exports to North American markets. Maintaining fair dispute settlement mechanisms is one success that is valuable for stable agri-food trade. We will be reviewing the details and working with the Canadian government to continue modernizing North American agri-food trade where success was not achieved.

With this agreement, we look forward to stability returning to our integrated North American agri-food supply chains. The imposition of tariffs and uncertainty over the last several months has been challenging. In Canada, food and beverage is the largest manufacturing employer, more than the automotive and aerospace sectors combined. Agri-food manufacturing jobs and a prosperous agri-food sector go hand in hand.

One of the biggest lessons learned over the last several months is that Canada must intensify our efforts to diversify our trade and open offshore markets for our exporters. The consequences of relying on the U.S. market have been made clear. That is why we strongly support the swift ratification of the Comprehensive and Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and other trade diversification efforts, in particular in Asia.

We appreciate the tireless work of Minister Chrystia Freeland and the Canadian negotiating team on reaching a deal with our North American trading partners. Our team Canada approach, including the efforts of agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, helped achieve the result we have today.

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CAFTA is the voice of Canadian agri-food exporters, representing the 90% of farmers who depend on trade and the ranchers, producers, processors and 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