



Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI)

From: The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA)

Submitted: November 21, 2022

To: House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Canada
Submitted via email: AGRI@parl.gc.ca

RE: Submission to AGRI on Global Food Insecurity Study

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA), we are pleased to submit the following information to the AGRI Committee as it continues to look at issues related to global food insecurity. We believe that access to food should know no boundaries and that trade policy rooted in free and open trade is one of the best ways to ensure food remains plentiful around the world.

Introduction

As the fifth largest global agri-food exporter, countries around the world depend on Canada for their food security. Canada therefore has a meaningful role to play in helping alleviate food insecurity around the world. Canadian agri-food exporters sell over half of our products in over 150 countries around the world. For example, anywhere from 50% of our beef to 90% of our pulses end up on plates around the world.

We believe free and open trade will enable our sector to continue to play an important role in global food security. To do so, exporters must have competitive access to markets guided by the principles of rules-based trade.

According to the Potsdam Institute and cited by the World Trade Organization (WTO), today 1 in 6 people in the world depends on international trade to be fed. This number will be around 50% of humanity by 2050, hence the need for better and more trade.

We must therefore work diligently at overcoming challenges such as trade-distorting subsidies and various forms of protectionism. To support the ability of our sector to continue to provide food to the world, CAFTA offers the following recommendations to members of the AGRI Committee:

1. **Diversify and keep agri-food markets open:** this has been instrumental in avoiding food shortages such as during the 2008-09 financial crisis as well as since the start of the pandemic. We must ensure

we do not slide backward and retreat by allowing barriers to seep into the global trading system in the name of “food security”.

2. **Limit export restrictions:** policy makers should refrain from using export restrictions, prohibitions on agri-food trade, in line with the Ministerial Declaration at MC12 and the call last month by major multilateral agencies to minimize distortions, market interventions and subsidies. Today restrictions on food, feed, and fertilizers in 52 countries remain a cause of global concern.
3. **Invest in transparency to minimize disruptions to global trade:** in times of crisis, countries have demonstrated an ability to provide information and notifications of measures adopted in a relatively timely, transparent manner. Such practices should remain in place and be made permanent for sanitary and phytosanitary and technical measures that affect agricultural trade.
4. **Facilitate trade:** policy makers should enhance the implementation of the SPS Agreement, in line with the Ministerial Declaration at MC12, support greater regulatory cooperation and harmonization of standards and engage with the private sector to reduce compliance costs and expedite agri-food trade via digital solutions and tools.
5. **Re-orient existing policies towards investments in productivity, sustainability, and resilience:** The latest OECD report on agriculture policy found that in most cases, existing domestic support in agri-food distorts trade without providing effective solutions to food security and sustainability. This suggests that instead, public spending should be shifted towards investments in food and agriculture innovation and improving food supply chain infrastructure and resilience.
6. **Reinstate the WTO Appellate Body and ensure a fully functioning dispute settlement system:** policy makers should reinforce the WTO’s core functions by restoring the Appellate Body as the WTO holds the key to stability, security and predictability to conduct global trade.

Conclusion

Ultimately, global food security is a security issue. Free and predictable agricultural trade can feed the people, the planet and the economy – but this can only be realized through global cooperation and better predictability and security in the multi-lateral trading system.

As the industry endeavours to increase exports at a time of growing global food insecurity, CAFTA members are looking to government to continue to open doors abroad, champion enabling regulations that will allow the industry to remain competitive globally and work to limit the use of regulatory approaches that restrict trade and enact barriers. We need to be quicker to the market with products and policy solutions.

We believe that strong collaboration between industry and government is essential to enable Canada’s agri-food sector to grow trade opportunities and enhance Canada’s role as a reliable and sustainable global food supplier.

About CAFTA

CAFTA is a coalition of national organizations that support a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food. Representing the 90% of farmers who depend on trade and 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.

CC:

Kody Blois, Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

John Barlow, Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Yves Perron, Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Josée Harrison, Clerk of the Committee, Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food