

CAFTA welcomes pledge by Canada and 42 WTO members to safeguard and strengthen the global trading system

Ottawa, ON - May 5, 2020 – Dan Darling, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today issued the following statement in response to the pledge by several WTO members to preserve and strengthen the rules-based global trading system.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic has gripped the world for months, keeping agri-food trade free and open has been instrumental in avoiding food shortages and preserving supply chains around the world. The WTO has an essential role to play in this regard.

“This crisis has shown clearly that the WTO is foundational for the rules-based global trading system itself. Now more so than before, Canadian agri-food exporters need rules, disciplines, predictability, transparency and enforcement back in the global trading system.

“We applaud the leadership role Minister Ng and the Canadian government has taken to stand tall on the world stage in support of free and open trade, WTO modernization and the rules-based system. More WTO members should join this pledge.

“In times of crisis, we need more trade, not less trade. The commitment to not impose new export restrictions or other new barriers on agri-food products will be key to supporting economic recovery efforts once the immediate threat of the pandemic itself subsides.

“We must now work extra hard to ensure we do not slide backward by allowing trade barriers and other forms of protectionism to seep into the global trading system. Doing so will lead to trade disruptions, less growth, fewer jobs, food insecurity and higher prices. Simply put, free and open trade is the best way to create and protect jobs and secure the economy recovery while feeding people in every corner of the globe.

“We call on Canada and other WTO members to intensify efforts to reform and modernize the WTO including efforts to resolve the continued paralysis of the Appellate Body.

“This crisis has shown once again that protectionism is failed policy and that the continued pursuit of trade liberalization is the best path forward.”

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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 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 90 per cent of Canada’s agri-food exports and support about a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.

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