

Agri-food exporters applaud upcoming first round of trade talks with ASEAN

March 17, 2022

Dan Darling, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today issued the following statement following Minister Ng's presentation of the federal government's negotiating objectives toward a free trade agreement between Canada and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In accordance with the current tabling of treaties policy, the first round will take place within the next 30 days.

"We are pleased to see the federal government moving swiftly to hold the first round of talks between Canada and ASEAN.

"For our members, this is the most important export opportunity in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region."

"Several agriculture and agri-food segments stand to benefit from an ambitious Canada-ASEAN pact including canola, beef, pork, pulses, canola, oilseeds and grains. Removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers may also provide long-term opportunity for sugar-containing products and processed food products.

"We look forward to working alongside Canada's negotiators to secure an ambitious agreement which includes tariff liberalization that creates meaningful market access, forward-looking rules of origin provisions that support Canada's agri-food supply chains and addressing non-tariff barriers that create a more transparent and predictable trading system.

"We have long believed that Canada must play to its strengths in global trade to help drive forward post-pandemic recovery. As a sector at the forefront of science, innovation and sustainability, an ambitious Canada-ASEAN pact will help our sector deliver gains for people, the planet and the economy."

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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. In 2017, Canada's total agri-food exports to ASEAN reached \$1.95 billion. This makes ASEAN Canada's 4th largest market for agri-food exports.

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