

Canadian agri-food exporters mark provisional application of CETA

Montreal – September 21, 2017 – The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) welcomes the beginning of provisional application of the historic Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union (EU) and looks forward to timely resolution of remaining barriers.

Today, CAFTA representatives attended a celebration of the agreement held by the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade.

“While we urge the government to resolve the outstanding issues, we are also encouraged that Canada is forging ahead with its commitment to freer trade with the world’s second largest economy,” said Brian Innes, CAFTA president. “Eventually, CETA will mean preferential access for Canadian agri-food to an \$18 trillion market that includes 500 million people.”

The potential for Canada making greater trade inroads in EU markets is huge. Canada exported \$3.5 billion in agriculture and food products to the EU in 2016 – making it the country’s fourth largest export destination. When the CETA is fully implemented, it will eliminate EU tariffs on almost 94 per cent of Canada’s agri-food products.

While the results won’t be immediate for some agri-food sectors, the agreement presents the potential to drive additional exports of up to \$1.5 billion per year. This includes \$600 million in beef, \$400 million in pork, \$100 million in grains and oilseeds, \$100 million in sugar containing products and a further \$300 million in processed foods, fruits and vegetables.

“At a time when some countries are looking inward, it’s critical that Canada continues to pursue free trade agreements like CETA,” Innes said. “Our growing export-oriented agri-food sector relies on access to markets. We encourage our government officials to keep up the hard work required to resolve remaining issues.”

Innes cited the slow progress the EU is making to allow real, commercially viable access to the EU for agri-food exporters. This includes progress on meat processing protocols, crop protection products, country of origin labelling and the timely approval of biotechnology traits. CAFTA members are also very concerned with recent protectionist measures from Member States under the guise of country of origin labelling provisions. These measures are not in the spirit of CETA and threaten to fragment the common EU market.

CAFTA President Brian Innes was in Montreal for the launch ceremony. CAFTA staff and members have recognized the potential of the CETA from inception of the pre-negotiation phase, through the negotiations and the implementation process. We will continue to work closely with government and negotiators on the implementation of this deal to ensure that the immense potential of the CETA is realized.

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CAFTA is the voice of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters. CAFTA members represent over 90 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports, more than \$55 billion in exports annually. The economic activity created by CAFTA members supports hundreds of thousands of jobs in agriculture and food manufacturing. A significant portion of these jobs would not exist without competitive access to world markets. CAFTA members represent farmers, producers, processors and exporters from the trade dependent sectors including the beef, pork, grains, oilseeds, sugar, pulse, soy and malt sectors. www.cafta.org

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