



Canada negotiating ground-breaking trade agreement with the EU

Ottawa, January 25, 2010 —Negotiations towards a comprehensive Canada-EU trade agreement have the potential to generate unprecedented benefits for all Canadian economic sectors, particularly agriculture and agri-food, says the Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA).

After a week of meetings in Brussels, Canadian and European Union negotiators wrapped up the second round of trade negotiations Friday, as they work towards a Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). The first round of negotiations was held in October 2009 in Ottawa.

CAFTA was in Brussels during the negotiations to represent the interests of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters and to promote the importance of the agreement to Canadian negotiators and European stakeholders.

“The Canada-EU CETA could be the most significant market-opening agreement Canada has ever negotiated,” says Kathleen Sullivan, Executive Director of CAFTA. “With so much on the table—not only goods and services but also investment, government procurement, labour and more—Canada could expand market access in Europe and achieve gains that go well beyond other trade agreements including NAFTA.”

In terms of agriculture and agri-food, says Ms. Sullivan, the new economic partnership could mean an additional \$3 billion or more in Canadian sales to Europe every year.

The involvement of provincial governments, who were all at the negotiations in Brussels, makes these trade negotiations unique and increases the potential gains for agriculture and other sectors, she says. “The Europeans are interested in gaining more access to Canadian procurement contracts, investment opportunities and other areas that fall under Canadian provincial jurisdiction. The ability to offer the EU new investment and procurement opportunities could open markets for Canadian agriculture and other goods.”

Canada and the EU have agreed to conduct three additional rounds of negotiations by the fall of this year, with the next round scheduled for April in Ottawa.

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About CAFTA

CAFTA is a coalition of national and regional organizations, associations and companies which support a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food. CAFTA’s members include producer organizations, processors, marketers and exporters from the major trade dependent sectors in Canada. Together, CAFTA’s members produce almost 80 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports, conduct about \$40 billion in business annually and directly employ close to 500 thousand Canadians.

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For more information on CAFTA, visit www.cafta.org