



Canadian farmers call for completion of new WTO multilateral trade agreement in 2010

Geneva, December 3, 2009 – As Canada’s trade-dependent agricultural sector continues to be threatened by protectionism, it is critical that Canada work for a 2010 conclusion to the WTO Doha Round of agricultural negotiations, says the Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA).

CAFTA representatives were in Geneva on the occasion of the 7th WTO Ministerial Conference and a meeting of ministers from the Cairns Group—a coalition of the world’s major agricultural exporting nations, including Canada.

“Canada’s agricultural sector depends on a fair and open international trading system, with 92 per cent of Canadian farmers reliant upon exports for their livelihood,” says CAFTA President Darcy Davis. “All countries must recommit to completing the Doha Round and reaching a new multilateral trade agreement at the earliest opportunity. With the required political will, this should be doable in 2010.” 2010 is the target set by world leaders for conclusion of a new liberalized multilateral trade agreement.

The Doha negotiations have been lagging for too long, CAFTA says. The alliance echoes the call by the Cairns Group and others for a serious re-engagement in the negotiations, and looks forward to Canada playing a leading role in the process. CAFTA commends Canada’s Minister of International Trade, Stockwell Day, and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Gerry Ritz, for their leadership in attending the 7th WTO Ministerial and in voicing their commitment to creating opportunities for Canada’s exporters.

“There is a strong consensus among WTO Ministers that we must conclude the Doha Round and reach a new agreement,” Davis says. “The longer we continue without a multilateral agreement to stabilize trade, the greater the risk that Canadian farmers will be increasingly disadvantaged in international markets by protectionist measures.”

Many countries are using existing rules to maintain export subsidies, support domestic producers, and use up flexibilities in current agreements to protect markets from competitive imports from nations like Canada, CAFTA says. There is also growing use of trade-distorting non-tariff barriers.

The stakes are high for Canadian agricultural producers; Canada is the fourth largest agriculture and agri-food exporter in the world and a George Morris Centre study has found that tariff reductions brought about by a new WTO agreement could increase Canadian agriculture exports by \$3 billion a year.

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.

For more information, contact: Darcy Davis, 403-888-2394

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

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The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance represents producers, processors and exporters of agriculture and agri-food products, as well as suppliers of agricultural inputs. CAFTA’s members are united in their dependence on trade, and in their need for a liberalized international trading environment.