



Time to Harvest the Deal - Potential WTO Agreement Means Billions for Canadian Exporters

January 30, 2008 - The prospect of a WTO agreement within the next few months is being welcomed by Canada's agriculture and agri-food exporters.

"The agreement that seems to be coming together is a good deal for Canada. Late last year, CAFTA commissioned an analysis of the work that has been done to date; we can clearly demonstrate that Canada's exporters will realize significant gains through a WTO agreement," said Darcy Davis, CAFTA President. "The analysis indicates that this agreement would generate an annual increase of about \$3 Billion in export value for selected primary Canadian commodities."

"CAFTA has been closely monitoring developments in Geneva over the last several months," said Rick White, CAFTA Vice President. "There's been considerable progress made since July and we expect the momentum will continue to carry forward this year. It's not impossible that we could see an agreement before the end of the spring."

"The analysis of the benefits coupled with news on further progress in the negotiations comes at a critical time," said Keith Lancaster, CAFTA Executive Director. "The impact of a high Canadian dollar has been hitting agricultural exporters very hard – and it's been an even tougher year for our beef and pork sectors that are also dealing with the effects of continuing market access issues."

"The agreement that is on the table will clearly benefit Canadian agriculture," said Lancaster. "Our members are anxious to see the agreement pulled together as soon as possible."

"Every day we don't have an agreement represents almost \$10 Million in lost opportunity for Canadian exporters," said Davis. "And, the international marketplace needs improved rules and disciplines, as we saw most recently with the EU decision to reintroduce export subsidies for pork."

"Over 200,000 Canadian farmers are directly dependent on the export market," said Lancaster. "These small businesses either export their production or sell it domestically at international prices. In any case, a healthy export market is critical to their ongoing viability."

"CAFTA will be watching the negotiations closely, here at home and in Geneva, in the coming weeks," said Davis. "We will continue to encourage the Government of Canada, and the missions of other WTO countries, to seek an ambitious agreement as soon as possible."

-30 –

The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance represents producers, processors and exporters of agriculture and agri-food products, as well as suppliers of agricultural inputs. Accounting for over 80% of Canada's agriculture and food exports, and more than 60% of farm cash receipts, CAFTA's members are united in their dependence on trade, and in their need for a liberalized international trading environment.

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