



## CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD TRADE ALLIANCE

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# NEWS RELEASE

## Mr. Prime Minister – Tell Us It Isn't True

**Ottawa: Monday May 8, 2006** – “Prime Minister Harper, please tell us that you haven't removed Canada from negotiations on agricultural market access at the World Trade Organization.” That is the message contained in a letter sent urgently to the Prime Minister by the President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA).

“We have been told that last week Canada stood alone in a negotiating session on agricultural “sensitive products” and opposed an emerging consensus that might have resulted in tariff reductions,” said CAFTA President Liam McCreery. “If that is true, the world's most trade dependent country, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest agriculture and food exporter, is now totally isolated from the negotiations on agricultural market access. We are now unable to represent the interests of any sector of Canada's agriculture and food industry.”

CAFTA's letter, which urgently requests a meeting with the Prime Minister, points out that the world's most sensitive products are meat and grain products – Canada's two largest agricultural exports. These products face tariffs that reach over 600% in many of the richest, most lucrative markets around the world. “If Canada has taken the position that these tariff peaks must not be subject to any reductions, our country is stating that it's O.K. for our products to be kept out of many international markets,” said Mr. McCreery.

If Canada is standing alone against consensus, its credibility in other negotiations has also been seriously damaged. CAFTA's letter asks the Prime Minister: “How can Canada aggressively pursue elimination of export subsidies, and ambitious cuts in trade distorting support by other WTO members, when we won't even discuss minimal reductions in over quota tariffs? How can Canada be a leader in the non-agriculture market access and services negotiations when we are so intransigent on agricultural market access?”

“We hope that the Prime Minister will meet with us in the very near future to answer these and other questions about Canada's role at the WTO,” said Mr. McCreery. We need to know that our government will fulfill its promises for an ambitious WTO agreement for the majority of Canadian farmers, processors and exporters, and for the entire Canadian economy.”

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*The Canadian Agri-Food Trade 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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