



CAFTA Elects New President and Vice-President

January 21, 2008 -- The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) is pleased to announce the election of Darcy Davis as its new President and the election of Rick White as Vice President. CAFTA represents agricultural producers, processors and exporters united in their dependence on trade, and in their desire for a liberalized trading environment. Canadian agricultural sectors represented by CAFTA account for more than 60 per cent of Canada's farm cash receipts.

Darcy Davis is a cow-calf producer from Acme, Alberta. Davis is a Director of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and a Past Chair of the Alberta Beef Producers. Rick White is Director of Policy Development with the Canadian Canola Growers Association and continues to operate a family grain farm near Oxbow, Saskatchewan.

Davis said, "Over 90 per cent of Canada's farmers are directly dependent on exports – they either export their products or sell them domestically at international prices. For farmers like me, an open and healthy export market is critical."

"Right now, Canada's beef and pork sectors are facing some severe challenges as a result of restrictive trade barriers and a high Canadian dollar," said Davis. "Opening up new markets, and reducing the barriers in the markets we export to, would go a long way to helping beef and pork producers across Canada."

"Grain and oilseed farmers also contend with significant barriers to growth and expansion," said White. "We continue to face some major access barriers, particularly for our value added products."

"CAFTA has been maintaining an active presence in Geneva over the past several months, monitoring the progress towards a WTO agreement. The progress has been steady, and we are hopeful an agreement can be reached in early 2008," said White.

"Negotiations in Geneva have been intense over the last several months," said CAFTA Executive Director Keith Lancaster. "Member countries have been very committed to the process, and we have seen some very strong and positive signals from the United States, the European Union and a number of developing nations. The agreement that seems to be coming together would provide significant gains for Canadian exports – and the over 200,000 farmers that are export dependent."

"CAFTA will be maintaining a presence in Geneva in the coming months and we are going to be actively engaged on the file here at home," said Davis. "We will be encouraging our Government to do everything they can to secure an ambitious agreement, as soon as possible."

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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.