



WTO Proposal on Agriculture Essential to Future of Canadian Farmers

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A revised proposal on how to reduce tariffs and subsidies for agriculture released today by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Agriculture is a step closer to an agreement that is essential to the future of Canadian farmers and processors of agricultural products, says the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA), a coalition of national and regional organizations, associations and companies that support a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food. Over 90 per cent of Canadian farmers are dependent on international markets.

“CAFTA is pleased to see that the draft released today continues to call for ambitious reductions of barriers to agriculture trade, including so-called sensitive products,” says Darcy Davis, President of CAFTA. “In the rest of the world, sensitive products are largely meat and grains, which are the most important agricultural goods produced in Canada and exported. Any lowering of ambition on sensitive products would be a major loss for Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sector. CAFTA is continuing to urge Canadian political leaders to support lowering of tariffs and expansion of quotas on sensitive products to ensure commercially meaningful market access gains for all Canadian agri-food products. We will be carrying that message to the WTO meetings in Geneva next week”

Davis adds that failure to reach an agreement at the WTO would be extremely costly. An independent analysis carried out by the George Morris Centre confirmed that new WTO rules as currently being negotiated would add an additional \$3 Billion per year to Canadian agricultural exports. This means that for each day without a new WTO agreement, there is a loss of roughly \$10 million in potential additional exports for Canada’s agriculture and agri-food industry.

“Canadian farmers continue to struggle with adverse economic conditions,” says Davis. “Canada is a trade dependent nation. One in every three Canadian jobs depends on trade, and we’re the fourth largest agriculture and agri-food exporter in the world. Reaching an agreement at the WTO that will give Canada greater access to world markets is clearly in the best interests of the majority of Canadian producers and processors.”

For the complete text of the WTO’s revised proposal visit

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/markacc_e/markacc_chair_texts07_e.htm

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