



Canada's Agriculture Exporters Thank Ministers Fortier, Ritz for Staying the Course

July 28, 2008 – Geneva Switzerland - After concerns last week that negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meetings in Geneva were close to falling apart, potentially costing Canadian agricultural exporters billions of dollars in lost export opportunities, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) is pleased and relieved that negotiations are continuing. Countries involved in the meetings agreed to continue talking after WTO Director General Pascal Lamy tabled a package of compromise parameters for agricultural tariff and subsidy reductions. 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, is urging Canadian negotiators to seek commercially meaningful market access gains for all Canadian agri-food products.

“Minister of Agriculture and Agri Food Gerry Ritz has informed CAFTA that he and Minister of Trade Michael Fortier will see these negotiations through to their conclusion, which now looks likely to happen Thursday of this week,” says Darcy Davis, President of CAFTA. “Several of our CAFTA delegates have made arrangements to stay in Geneva through the rest of the week as well, to continue lobbying Canada’s negotiators to show leadership in seeking new rules that will substantially reduce trade distorting support, expand access to export markets, and provide significant gains for Canadian agri-food exporters.

Independent analysis has confirmed that new WTO rules as currently being negotiated would bring an additional \$3 Billion per year in Canadian agricultural exports. Without a new agreement, the future competitiveness of Canada’s agriculture industry is at stake. Prosperity for Canadian agriculture is vitally dependent on trade, now and in the future.

For further information:

Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance Ottawa office 613-560-0500

Cindy McCreath 403-615-1526 cindy@mccreathenterprises.ca